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REPORT

ON THE

FAMINE IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

IN

1896 AND 1897

BY

100054

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WITH APPENDICES.

VOLUME I.

REPORT & APPENDIX I.

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Government Forests
Feodatory States
Zamindaries

Narrative of the Famine in the Central Provinces in 1896-97.

INTRODUCTORY.

Failure of rain during the months of September and October 1896 was the immediate cause of the famine of 1896-97. The crops withered and the harvest failed.

No just appreciation, however, of the character of this great calamity, of the difficulties which it presented, or of the measures required to combat them, can be attained without a glance at the physical features of the Central Provinces, the character and distribution of their population, and the antecedent circumstances which converted into acute and widespread famine a disaster which, but for them, might have occasioned mere conditions of scarcity.

The first Chapter of this narrative will accordingly comprise an account of the geographical and agricultural divisions of the Province, of the diversities of climate and population which it presents, of the condition in normal times of the principal classes of society, and their ability to support the stress of bad years. The character of the seasons which preceded the famine, their effects on the harvests of each year, and the gradual deterioration which took place in the circumstances of the people, will also require discussion; and it is in this Chapter also that the measures adopted by Government to relieve distress, wherever it existed, before actual famine conditions prevailed, can most conveniently be summarised.

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVINCES, THEIR AGRICULTURAL HISTORY, AND THE SITUATION AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FAMINE.

Geographical divisions of the Province.

The Central Provinces are generally described as a hilly and forest-clad country, with a sparse and backward population. This description is applicable to them as a whole, but it fails to give a true idea of the great varieties of country and people to be found within their limits. Broadly speaking, the Province may be divided into five main tracts.

The northernmost, comprising the districts of Saugor and Damoh and the northern sub-division of Jubbulpore known as the Murwara tahsil, is situated on an outlying portion of the Central Indian plateau, and belongs to the Vindhyan system.

Next in order is the fertile but narrow valley of the Nerbudda, in which tract lie the rest of Jubbulpore, the districts of Hoshangabad and Narsinghpur, and part of the Nimar District.

South of this valley comes the great plateau of the Satpuras, the leading physical feature in the geography of the Province. In this extensive mass of hills and elevated plain are situated the Satpura or Plateau districts, comprising the remainder of Nimar, Betul, Chhindwara, Seoni, Mandla, and part of Balaghat.

South again of these uplands are the two main plains of the Province, divided from each other by a southerly extension of the Satpuras and an intervening strip of Feudatory territory. The western, which forms the basin of the Wainganga river and its chief tributary, the Wardha, is generally designated the Nagpur country, and consists of the Nagpur-Wardha plain, comprising the districts of these names, and the Wainganga Districts of Chanda, Bhandara and the southern half of Balaghat.

The eastern tract, forming the drainage area of the Mahanadi, constitutes Chhattisgarh, the central plain being hemmed in on all sides by Zamindaris and Feudatory States consisting chiefly of hills and forests. The British Districts of Raipur, Bilaspur and Sambalpur are included in this tract.

While, however, these five tracts of the Provinces are distinct from each other in their main characteristics, the districts of each tract do not exactly coincide with the tract limits; each of the Satpura Districts has some open and well-cultivated country, and the Satpuras, on the other hand, by throwing spurs out north and south, encroach on the limits of the plains below. Thus it comes about that every district of the Provinces contains some hilly and forest country to justify the general description with which this Chapter began. It follows that every officer charged with the administration of a district has to deal with those peculiarities of population and custom which are inseparable from forest tracts and materially influence the character of famine administration.

Administrative Divisions.

2. Mention must also be made of the administrative and territorial divisions into which the Province is divided. Under the Native rule which preceded the British Government, it was customary to administer the remoter and wilder tracts, from which little revenue could be derived, through a number of petty chieftains who were responsible to the sovereign power for the maintenance of law and order within their territories. After the country had come under British rule and the Provinces were formed in 1862, the oldest and most important of these chieftaincies were constituted Feudatory States, and the remainder were included in the British Districts to which they were attached, and continued to be designated *Zamindaris*. The Feudatory States (with the single exception of Makrai in Hoshangabad) fall within the great Chhattisgarh tract, which they completely shut in on the east, south and west. They comprise an area of 28,000 square miles, and hold a population by the last census of a little over two millions. For the present they may be left out of account. The Zamindaris, on the other hand, as forming part

of the British Districts, require a word of description. The least important, those of Bhandara and Balaghat, though some of them are thinly peopled and hilly, are mostly so intermingled with the regularly administered tracts that they too have come under regular administration. But the remaining Zamindaris, occupying large areas of Chhattisgarh, Chanda and Chhindwara (including the country immediately adjacent in Hoshangabad), still retain some of their distinctive character. With a few exceptions in the case of some of the Chhattisgarh estates which lie in open country, these Zamindaris are wild, thinly peopled and backward. Government Police posts have of recent years been established in the Chhattisgarh Zamindaris, but elsewhere the Zamindars maintain their own police, and it is to the Zamindar that the District Officer first looks for assistance when special administrative work has to be done within his borders, whether it be the repression of crime or the organization of famine relief.

The total area of the Province, including the Feudatories politically attached to it, is 115,700 square miles, equal to that of Austria without Hungary. The area of the British Districts is 86,600 square miles, or only some 2,000 square miles less than the combined areas of England, Scotland and Wales. Of these 86,600 square miles, 19,600 consist of Government forest reserves, and the Zamindaris of Chanda, Chhindwara and Chhattisgarh account for just under 19,000. The remaining area or 48,000 square miles consists of the estates of private owners known as malguzars. In addition to the Government forests, very large areas of forest are included in private estates, and the Zamindaris in particular are largely forest-clad.

The British Districts are distributed among four Divisions, each administered by a Commissioner. These are—Jubbulpore, which contains, besides the district of that name, the Vindhyan Districts and the two Satpura Districts of Mandla and Seoni; Nerbudda, comprising the Nerbudda Valley Districts and the Satpura Districts of Betul and Chhindwara; while the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh Divisions coincide with the limits of the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh tracts. The areas administered by the two former Commissioners are each about equal to that of Servia, while the two latter have charges equal in extent to Greece.

The People.

Population.

3. The population of the British Districts is $10\frac{3}{4}$ millions, having a density of about 125 to the square mile, but if Government forest be excluded, the density rises to 160 souls to the square mile.

Aboriginal tribes.

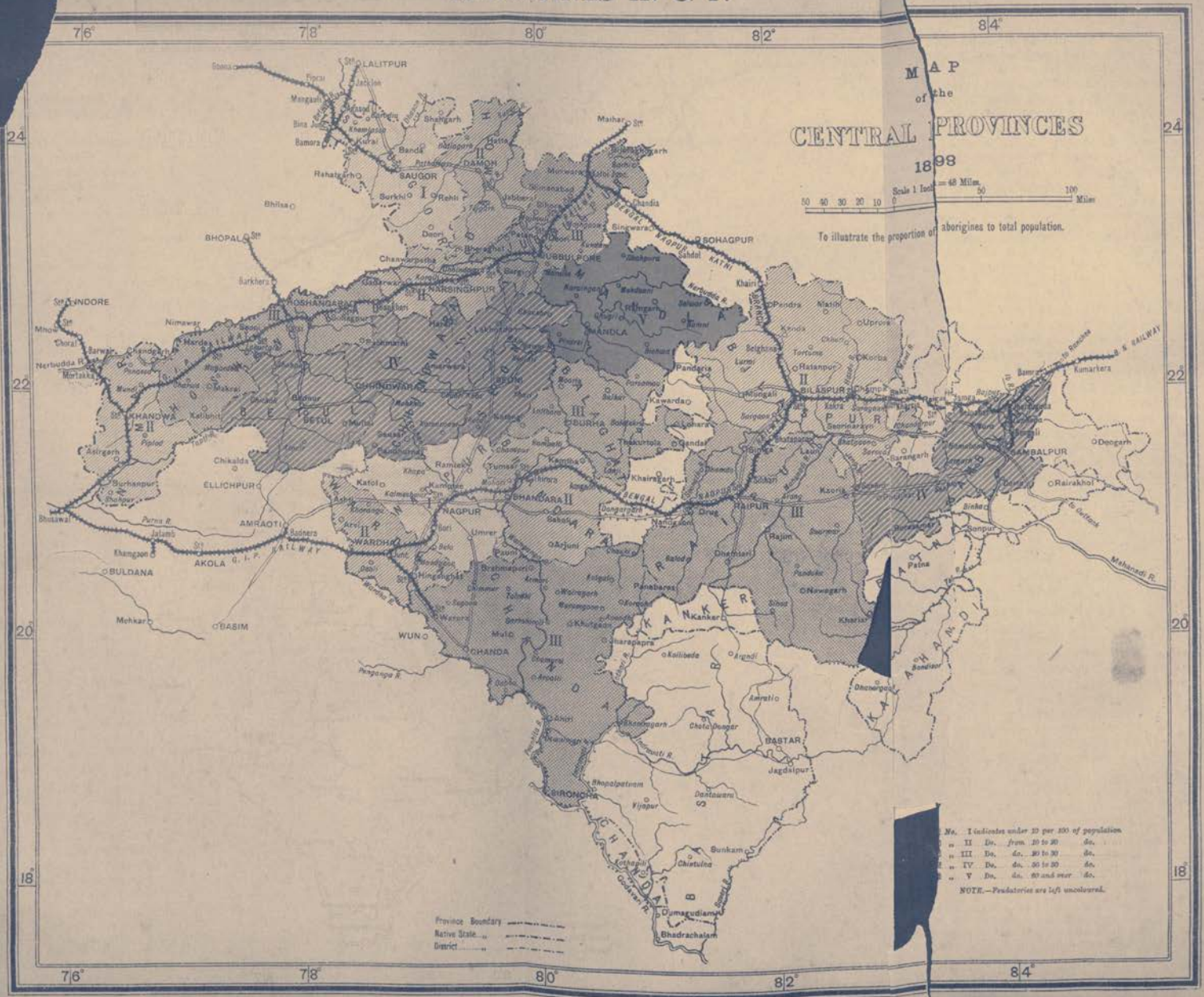
Of this total population of $10\frac{3}{4}$ millions nearly two and a half million belong to aboriginal tribes, of whom the Gonds, numbering 1,788,000, are the most important and the most widely distributed. The other principal tribes are the Korkus, Bhils, Halbas and Kols, all of whom, like the Gonds, carry on agriculture, though of an inferior kind. In addition to these are aboriginal tribes who have never yet settled to agriculture, other than cultivation with the axe and fire. Among these are the Baigas of Mandla and Balaghat, the Bharias of Chhindwara, the Marias of Chanda and the Dhanwars of Bilaspur. Of them (not to go back to older accounts) the present Commissioner of Jubbulpore, Mr. J. B. Fuller, who was for twelve years Settlement Commissioner of these Provinces, wrote in 1892:—

> To these people the plough is still an experimental implement, and a yoke of bullocks quite beyond management. They grow scattered crops of millets on the hillsides, but their instrument of cultivation is the axe, and their fields are merely clearings on which the timber and brushwood have been cut and burnt.

Destructive cultivation of this kind has long been prohibited in Government forests, and is now greatly restricted in private forests, but only in a few instances have people of this description taken to more settled cultivation. Of their condition Mr. Fuller wrote:—

> Judging from appearances, these jungle tribes are the poorest of the poor. They go about naked and for a large part of the year eat no grain whatever. For them grain is rather a luxury than a necessity, and merely supplements the jungle roots and berries which are the mainstay of their lives.

ABORIGINES IN C. P.



Reg. No. 170, Ch. Census. C. U.—April '98—2.5.

Photo., S. I. C., Calcutta.

The above description, however, only relates to the very wildest tribes occupying the most inaccessible hill and forest tracts. The superior aboriginal tribes, such as the Gonds and Korkus, are to be found in very various degrees of civilization. A fair sprinkling of them is settled in plains villages, where they have mixed with the general labouring population. The proportion increases as the hills are approached, and in the hilly tracts there are extensive areas which are almost entirely peopled by aboriginal tribes. In such tracts the Gonds and Korkus have become fair cultivators, and it is in these localities that a remnant of landed proprietors of these races continues to resist absorption by Hindus. But cultivation in such tracts is necessarily poor. The chief grain used consists of coarse hill millets, and the crops raised have to be supplemented in other ways. For this purpose these people descend into the plains by thousands during harvest operations, and with their earnings from this labour, added to the *mahua* flower (*bassia latifolia*) and other forest fruits and roots, they eke out their subsistence. The tracts which these people chiefly inhabit are very malarious, and all aboriginal races are addicted to liquor, upon which they consume much of their cash earnings. To their fondness for drink is attributed much of their chronic poverty, but it is a matter of common belief that the spirits they consume act as a prophylactic against malaria. At any rate it is certain that the enforced abstinence from alcoholic stimulants which hard times entail must be a very serious deprivation to them, especially when coupled with an increased diet of jungle fruits and roots and a much diminished allowance of grain.

Superior aboriginal races.

4. It may be said generally of the aborigines that, though a small number of them by intercourse with Hindus have become merged in the general population, the great majority have retained their distinctive characteristics as jungle tribes. The best of them are fair cultivators, the poorest live by shooting game with bows and arrows and snaring birds and fish, and even supplement their food of roots and berries by field mice, lizards and snails. Between these extremes are many grades, but all have this in common that they are possessed of no resources and accumulate no wealth. Though prized as servants for their honesty, they are looked down upon by the Hindu for their simplicity. By character they are reticent, timid, and extraordinarily superstitious and suspicious of innovations. Though many are migratory in their habits, their migration merely means a movement from one jungle site to another. The ways of men and cities are strange to them; however acute their distress, they would never come forward to complain.

General condition of aborigines.

From time to time allusion will be made in this narrative to the problems of famine administration among people of this type, but it can be well understood how difficult it is to gauge the border line which divides the habitual condition of hardship to which they are inured from the earlier phases of distress.

5. Of the remaining four-fifths of the people as a whole little need be said. They are all in origin immigrants from Upper India, Berar and the Deccan, who have now long since cut off all connection with the country from which their ancestors came. They comprise among them representatives of all the principal classes found in other parts of India—the cultivating, the trading, the artizan, the labouring, with a thin upper stratum of educated persons, and the usual residuum of the mendicant and vagrant castes. Among them the Hindu element largely prevails, and outside the large towns the proportion of Muhammadans is quite insignificant. There is besides a floating population of natives of other parts of India who have been attracted to the Provinces for purposes of trade or in search of employment.

Other races.

6. Allusion may, however, be made to two classes of the people, together numbering over a million, who, though nominally included among Hindus, are regarded as outcastes by the latter. These are the Satnámi Chamárs, almost exclusively confined to Chhattisgarh, and the Mahárs or Mahras who are found all over the Province.

Satnámi Chamárs.

The Satnámi Chamárs of Raipur and Bilaspur number some 400,000 souls; they are the followers of Ghásidás, a Chamár reformer, who some 70 years ago led a religious revolt against Brahmanical ascendancy. Although the Satnámi Chamárs of to-day have fallen away from the principles and tenets preached by their reformer, the antagonism between them and the Hindu is as bitter as ever, and this antipathy between the two classes has a significant bearing on the degree of help which a Chamár tenant or labourer can expect from a Hindu landlord when times are hard.

Mahárs or Mahras.

The other great class of outcastes, the Mahárs (or Mahras), belong mainly to the inferior weaving and labouring classes of the people. They number in all 626,000 persons, and most of the labourers of the Marathi districts of the Nagpur plain belong to this caste. Their touch is pollution to the Hindu, and they are not allowed to draw water from a well which supplies the wants of Hindus. A sprinkling of the caste in the Nagpur country have managed to amass some wealth, but as a whole they are a poor and down-trodden class. Sufferings which would excite the sympathy of a Hindu in the case of the superior castes are commonly viewed with callous indifference if the sufferer is a mere Mahár.

Agricultural Population.

7. Agriculture—to turn next to the occupations of the people—is the principal means of livelihood. Of the total population of the British Districts, 64 per cent. is agricultural, divided as follows:—

Land-owners	...	... 268,458
Tenants	...	... 4,633,579
Farm servants	...	... 820,564
Labourers	...	... 1,115,636

The landed classes.

Of the land-owners and tenants little need be said. The former as a class are above the reach of actual want, unless it be in the case of a few of aboriginal race, or some of the poorest co-sharers in large proprietary communities, which are much less numerous in the Central Provinces than in Upper India. The latter vary a great deal in circumstances. About a fourth are prosperous cultivators free from debt and possessed of resources, while another fourth are either deeply involved in debt, or live by labour as well as cultivation; the remainder, or a half of the whole number, are in a state of constant indebtedness, carrying on their agriculture on borrowed capital, but nevertheless able to keep their heads above water and live in fair comfort.

It is only from the poorest section, in which are included a large proportion of the aboriginal tenants, that applicants for relief in times of severe distress are drawn.

Condition of the labouring classes.

Of the labouring sections, which together number 18 per cent. of the whole population, the farm servants most resemble in condition the poorest section of the tenantry. Members of these classes constantly pass from one status to the other. Inasmuch as these servants are usually in the employ of well-to-do agriculturists, they are generally supported by their masters in times of need, and only a certain proportion who are turned off when distress becomes acute are driven to seek Government relief. But it is the labourers proper, *i. e.*, those dependant on daily hire, numbering 11 per cent. of the total population, who are the first to feel the pressure of high prices or the contraction of employment which hard times involve.

The condition of these classes in normal times was investigated in 1888, and the result of the enquiries then made was thus summarized by Mr. Fuller in his Report of 1892 (already referred to):—

> It is extremely difficult to reduce to a money standard the annual earnings of the labouring class, as they include a mass of trifling perquisites. The enquiries of 1888 indicate that a man earning as little as Rs. 30 per annum can maintain his family in common food and clothing. It was shown that in a rice district the ordinary cost of food for a man, his wife and one child was 1¾ anna a day, and that if broken rice be substituted for rice, the cost would be reduced to 1⅛ anna a day. This sum would provide the family with 2½lbs. of grain and a small quantity of pulse, leaving ⅜ths anna for salt, vegetables and firewood.

Living in rice districts is cheaper than in districts the staple crop of which is wheat or juari, in that a considerable portion of the rice crop is broken up in the process of working, and the broken rice, which is sold very cheaply as being useless for the market, provides the poor with the means of sustaining life at an almost nominal cost. The cost of clothing for a family of three would, if kept to the lowest possible limit, not exceed Rs. 2 per annum, and on the ordinary scale would not exceed Rs 4-12-0. It is then evident that a family could live in fair comfort, according to their own notions of it, for a trifle over Rs. 30 a year, of which Rs. 25-8-0 would be spent in food. Judged by this standard few of the labouring class can want for food. The Saugor and Damoh Districts are reported to be those where poverty is most widespread, but of 259 labourers whose circumstances were investigated in these districts during the enquiries of 1888, only 7 per cent. were found to have a less income than Rs. 30, a fifth of the number earning over Rs. 100. Of 115 persons questioned in the hill districts of Seoni and Mandla, the proportions earning less than Rs. 30 and over Rs. 100 respectively were very nearly the same. In Chhindwara incomes under Rs. 30 constituted only 2 per cent. of 485 recorded. These are the districts where labour is least in demand. In the open country the average earnings are considerably higher.

The Report goes on to notice the difficulty of obtaining labourers during the survey operations to serve as chainmen or flag-holders Even in their own villages it was not found possible to secure the men required at a less remuneration than Rs. 5 a month in the plains districts and Rs. 4 a month in the hill districts.

The people—continues Mr. Fuller—can afford to reject labour which does not suit them, and the officers of the Public Works Department in these Provinces are compelled to work very largely with immigrants from Upper India, who flock to take up earthwork which the local men will not accept. Generally it may be said that the field labourers as a class are sufficiently fed, and are satisfied with their lives in spite of much which seems miserable and squalid. They are grossly improvident and owe as much as they can induce people to lend them. Their surplus earnings are mostly spent in drink, and they contribute very largely indeed to the Excise revenue of Government.

The difficulty noticed in the above extracts of inducing labourers to take to work outside the ordinary daily labour of the kind to which they are accustomed is well illustrated by the meaning which they attach to the word *begár*. The popular idea of the term *begár* is that it signifies unpaid labour—labour which is free to the employer and forced to the labourer. In village parlance, however, *begár* is merely the opposite of *rozgár*, the ordinary daily avocation. And the man who is taken away from his ordinary daily labour to some employment which is unusual to him will term his service *begár*, whether he is paid for it or not, and regard it as distasteful. He understands the annual migration for harvest operations, that is his *rozgár*; but he will not go far afield in search of work which is repugnant to him even in his own village. This habit of mind of the field labourer is significant, as throwing light on one of the many difficulties of famine administration in these Provinces which will be duly noticed in the course of this narrative.

Non-agricultural Population.

8. The non-agricultural population, as returned at the census, numbers 3,877,639 persons, or 36 per cent. of the total population. About 5 per cent. of these add agriculture as a subsidiary means of livelihood to their primary avocations, but besides this they include a great number of persons whose prosperity is closely connected with agriculture. Such are the village servants and artizans, who together number over a million and a half.

Artizans.

Among artizans the weavers and spinners, who number 585,000, are the most important. Their business has suffered more from foreign competition and the introduction of machinery than that of any other class of artizans, and the poorer members of them are even in normal times in a depressed condition. Basket-makers and makers of cheap jewellery and bangles, together numbering 100,000, are also very poorly off in normal times, the former owing to the small intrinsic value of the goods they make, the latter to the importation of cheap trinkets from outside.

Traders.

Retailers of food and provisions, tobacco, spices, spirits and drugs are better off, and the first class derive large profits when prices are high. These number 442,000. Similarly cartmen and pack-bullock drivers, money-lenders and those engaged in personal or domestic service, who together number 313,000, and represent transport, trade, and the servants of the well-to-do, cause little anxiety to the Famine Officer.

Miscellaneous.

Among miscellaneous classes may be noticed priests and religious mendicants (63,000), musicians, jugglers, strolling players, &c., (27,000), and beggars (118,000). The first of these classes generally have regular constituents amongst the well-to-do, and unless distress becomes very acute, prefer to shift for themselves, but the two last soon begin to suffer from the restricted charity which hard times involve.

Coolies.

Of the whole non-agricultural population, however, the most important class of all is the general labourer or coolie. These number 800,000, of whom only 50,000 are classed as workers on roads, 166,000 support themselves by cutting and selling fuel and grass, while 584,000 are general labourers. The latter are much on a par with field labourers proper, but are more ready to turn their hands to all kinds of miscellaneous work. Large numbers of them frequent the large towns, where there is a constant demand for carriers and porters, and the hot weather offers employment to many as punkah-pullers. The business of bringing in head-loads of firewood, grass and cow-dung cakes for fuel enables many to earn a subsistence, and women and children can add considerably in this manner to the income of the household. But in the case of this class also the local coolie does not make the best of his opportunities, and a large proportion of the labourers employed on road or railway construction, and of the operatives in mills and workshops, is drawn from immigrants from Upper India. Be that as it may, the labourers of the Province can ordinarily make a fair subsistence.

Condition of the people generally.

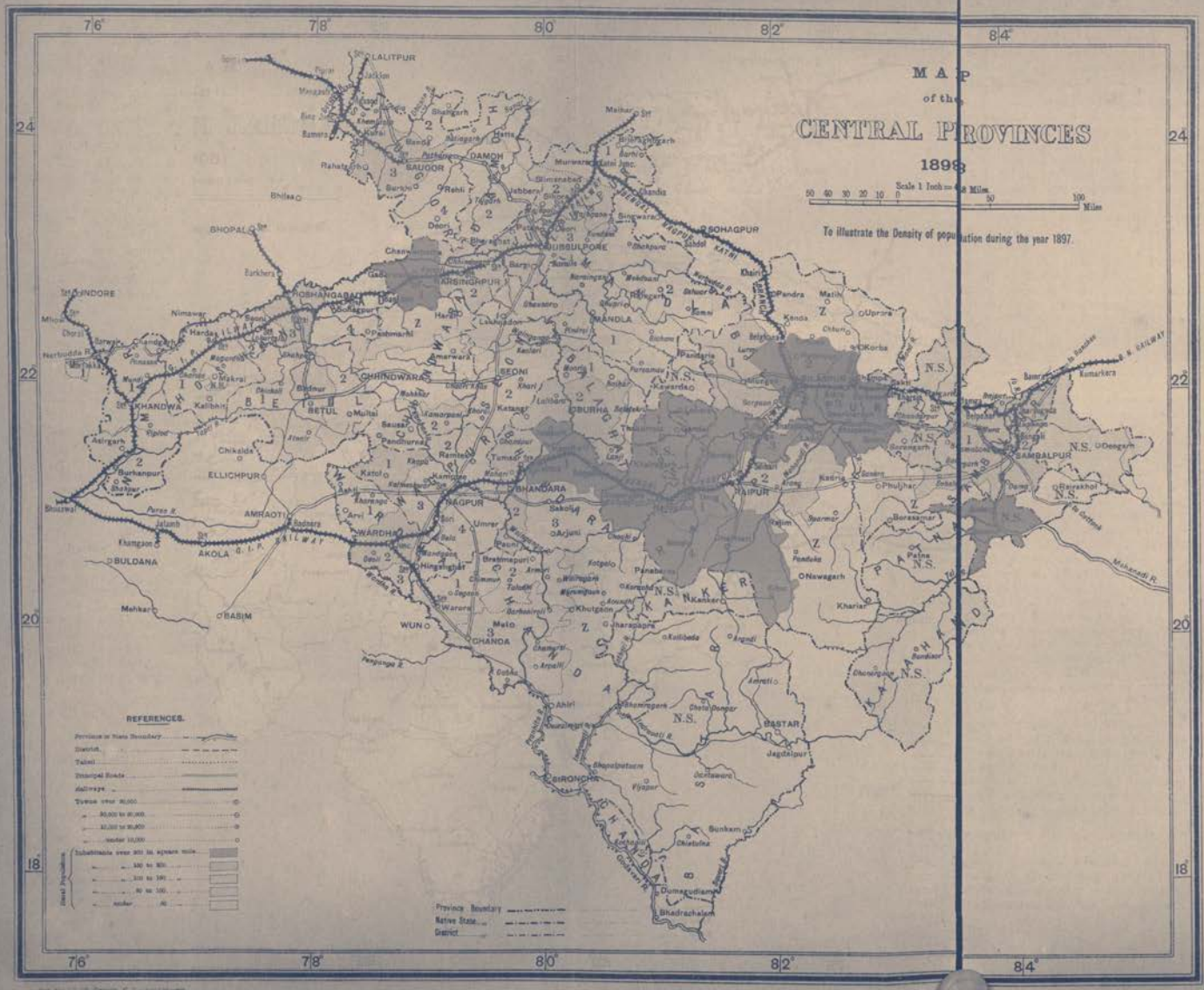
9. Of the people as a whole it may be said that though inferior in respect of wealth and education to their fellows in the older established Provinces of British India, they have progressed in a remarkable manner during the years which have elapsed since the formation of the Central Provinces in 1862. That in every class will be found individuals whose condition is miserably poor, and that the number of such is more numerous in some classes than in others, is a mere commonplace applicable to all human society. But that any whole sections of the population need be on the verge of starvation in ordinary times is absolutely precluded by the evidence available. The standard of comfort of some classes is undeniably very low. The daily food of the family, their housing and clothes, are on the lowest possible scale, but squalor in daily surroundings does not prevent them from spending a modicum on the minor luxuries, such as liquor and tobacco. And the money which might have been used for daily comforts is squandered at weddings and funerals. The enquiries of 1888 brought to light many illustrations of this. In Jubbulpore a carpenter earning Rs. 90 a year had spent Rs. 175 on a marriage. In Narsinghpur a basket-maker earning Rs. 120 a year had spent Rs. 550 on three marriages in his family, and owed Rs. 400. A shoemaker earning Rs. 50 a year had spent Rs. 100 on his own marriage. The minimum expenditure on a wedding among labourers is Rs. 25, the average Rs. 50, while Rs. 100 is not uncommon. Instances of poverty combined with ostentation could be multiplied indefinitely, but the few illustrations given seem to show that the labourer and artizan could better his daily lot by the exercise of more thrift, and that if he is at once thrown into distress when prices rise, it is largely because he is a slave of customs which lead him to exhaust his credit on useless show, so that it is no longer available to him when times are hard.

For purposes of famine administration, however, the people must be regarded as they are, and not as they might be, and it is easy to understand how, when crops fail and the prices of food grains rise, when there is less employment for the labourer, and less demand for the goods of the artizan, distress declares itself among the poorest members of the community. If the strain is prolonged, the distress ascends into higher strata of society until it begins to assail the small cultivator and better artizan, and the country is plunged into famine.

Distribution of the Population.

10. Such being the people in normal times, it is important to see how the various sections of which they are composed are distributed among the various districts and divisions of the Province, with particular reference to those classes which most demand the watchful care of Government in times of scarcity.

DENSITY OF POPULATION.


MAP
of the
CENTRAL PROVINCES
1898
Scale 1 Inch = 32 Miles
50 40 30 20 10 0 50 100 Miles
To illustrate the Density of population during the year 1897.
76° 78° 80° 82° 84°
24° 22° 20° 18°
LALITPUR
SAUGOR
DAMOH
JUBBULPORE
SOHAGPUR
BHOPAL
SEHORE
NARSINGHPUR
HOSHANGABAD
KHANDWA
BETUL
HARDA
CHHINDWARA
SEONI
MANDLA
BALAGHAT
BHANDARA
NAGPUR
WARDHA
AMRAOTI
ELLICHPUR
AKOLA
BULDANA
BASIM
CHANDA
WUN
RAIPUR
BILASPUR
SAMBALPUR
BASTAR
KANKER
NANDGAON
KHAIRAGARH
RAJNANDGAON
SIRONCHA
Bhadrachalam
Kamarkera
Sambalpur
Deogarh
Patna
Nawagarh
Borasambar
Phulhar
Khariar
Pandaria
Korba
Kenda
Uprora
Matin
Pendra
Khairagarh
Chhuikhadan
Kawardha
Sirgoja
Udaipur
Jashpur
Kunkuri
Dharamjaigarh
Raigarh
Gangpur
Bonai
Kolabira
Bamra
Sonepur
Khariar
Phuljhar
Patna
Nawagarh
Borasambar
Kalahandi
Jeypore
Malkangiri
Rampa
Chinturam
Bhadrachalam
Dumagudiam
Bunkam
Chintulna
Jagdalpur
Bastar
Kanker
Dhamtari
Kurud
Sihawa
Mainpat
Udaipur
Surguja

Density in various districts.

The first of the following tables shows the density and distribution of the population both urban and rural in the five distinct tracts of the Provinces enumerated in paragraph 1 above, and the proportion borne by the aboriginal classes to the rest. Each district is shown against the geographical division in which the major portion of it is situated :—

Geographical Division.	District.	Area in square miles.	Population.	Density per square mile.	Percentage of Population.		Number of towns with populations over 5,000.	Number of villages over 3,000.	Density per square mile of population of zamindaris in districts containing zamindaris.
					Urban.	Hill and forest tribes.			
Vindhyan ...	Saugor ...	4,007	591,743	147·7	11·3	8·2	4	3	...
	Damoh ...	2,831	325 613	115·0	5·2	11·3	2	1	...
	Total Vindhyan.	6,838	917.356	134·1	9·2	9·3	6	4	...
Nerbudda and Tapti Valleys.	Jubbulpore ...	3,948	748,146	189·5	13·3	24·9	3	4	...
	Narsinghpur ...	1,916	367,026	191·6	5·2	13·2	2	5	...
	Hoshangabad ...	4,594	529,945	115·4	7·7	20·1	4	5	27·0
	Nimar ...	3.357	253,486	75·5	19·0	14·5	2	3	...
	Total ...	13,815	1,988,603	137·4	10·9	19·9	11	17	...
Satpura Districts.	Mandla ...	5,056	339,373	67·1	1·5	60·3	1	...	...
	Seoni ...	3,198	370,767	115·9	3·2	43·4	1	1	...
	Chhindwara ...	4,630	407,494	88·0	6·8	40·4	4	2	42·0
	Betul ...	3,824	323,196	84·5	3·1	39·5	2	1	...
	Total ..	16,708	1.440,830	86·2	3·8	46·0	8	4	...
Wainganga Districts.	Wardha ..	2,428	400,854	165·1	11·1	11·4	6	5	...
	Nagpur ...	3,843	757,862	197·2	28·7	6·2	10	15	...
	Chanda ...	10,749	697,610	64·9	3·7	25·2	5	9	28·1
	Bhandara ...	3 968	742 850	187·2	4·1	15·0	4	5	157·4
	Balaghat ...	3,139	383.331	122·1	1·3	26·6	1	3	102·0
	Total ...	24,127	2 982 507	123·6	10·9	16·2	26	37	...
Chhattisgarh.	Raipur ...	11,724	1,584,427	135·1	2·2	20·7	3	1	67·4
	Bilaspur ...	8 341	1,164,158	139·6	1·5	17·8	2	3	75·3
	Sambalpur ...	4.948	796 413	161·0	1·8	30·3	1	2	136·4
	Total ...	25.013	3.544.998	141·7	1·9	21·9	6	6	...
	Total Central Provinces.	86,501	10,784,294	124·6	6·8	21·2	57	68	...

To appreciate the significance of the table it must be postulated that the difficulty of relieving distress varies inversely with the density of the population and with the number of towns and large villages. Although distress may be more acute in a thickly populated tract, each town or large village forms a centre where the distressed may collect and come under observation, and where

both public and private relief can be organized. The districts are accordingly classed in the order of facility of relief as judged by the number of square miles to each town or large village:—

District.	Number of square miles to each town or large village.	District.	Number of square miles to each town or large village.
Nagpur	153	Chhindwara	772
Wardha	221	Damoh	943
Narsinghpur	274	Balaghat	1,046
Hoshangabad	510	Betul	1,275
Jubbulpore	564	Seoni	1,559
Bhandara	564	Sambalpur	1,649
Saugor	572	Bilaspur	1,668
Nimar	671	Raipur	2,943
Chanda	767	Mandla	5,056

In the Satpura Districts the wild nature of much of the country and the large proportion of the aboriginal races sufficiently account for the absence of towns and large villages, but the paucity of large villages in Chhattisgarh, where the great central plain is open and populous, is a remarkable feature, a relic of the time when Chhattisgarh was a landlocked oasis shut off from the outer world by barriers of hills and forest. The Nagpur country was nearest the seat of Government, and the custom of collecting in small centres has long prevailed there. In Nimar, the Nerbudda Valley and the Vindhyan Districts the number of towns is not so large as in the Nagpur country, but is larger than in Chhattisgarh; and, with the possible exception of Damoh, famine relief is easier of administration than in either Chhattisgarh or the Plateau Districts.

Distribution by occupations.

11. Another method of comparing the differences between different districts of the Provinces is by a statement of the distribution of the people by occupations.

The most suitable headings for this table are the following:—

I.—Agricultural—

Owners.

Tenants.

Farm servants.

Field labourers.

II.—Non-Agricultural—

Personal service.

Industrial occupations.

General labourers.

Government servants and persons belonging to professions or engaged in commerce or miscellaneous occupations are omitted from consideration.

District.	PERCENTAGE ON TOTAL POPULATION OF CHIEF CLASSES.								
	I.—AGRICULTURAL.					II.—NON-AGRICULTURAL.			
	Owners.	Tenants.	Farm servants.	Labourers.	Total.	Personal service.	Industrial.	General labourers.	Total.
Saugor	3·5	32·5	2·9	8·1	47·0	4·8	23·4	16·1	44·3
Damoh	4·4	36·8	4·5	8·1	53·8	4·7	24·4	8·2	37·3
Jubbulpore	2·8	35·6	3·9	11·7	54·0	4·3	21·4	10·0	35·7
Mandla	1·2	55·6	6·8	9·7	73·3	0·9	10·9	6·9	18·7
Seoni	2·1	64·0	11·4	7·0	64·5	2·2	15·2	10·9	28·3
Narsinghpur	2·2	33·4	3·1	6·8	45·5	5·1	24·2	17·0	46·3
Hoshangabad	1·5	33·9	7·0	6·1	48·5	3·9	21·7	15·1	40·7
Nimar	17·4	23·5	3·5	14·7	59·5	2·3	23·1	4·0	29·4
Betul	1·6	47·8	6·4	12·1	67·9	1·4	17·2	6·2	24·8
Chhindwara	2·9	44·4	7·9	15·9	71·1	2·1	17·1	2·7	21·9
Wardha	2·7	24·8	9·8	*29·6	66·9	2·0	17·2	5·6	24·8
Nagpur	2·1	24·4	6·8	17·3	50·6	3·5	29·0	4·7	37·2
Chanda	1·6	33·7	6·3	17·8	59·4	1·7	27·6	3·7	33·0
Bhandara	2·7	37·1	9·6	14·9	64·3	1·5	26·1	2·1	29·7
Balaghat	2·1	43·2	13·6	12·7	71·6	1·6	17·7	2·6	21·9
Raipur	1·8	53·9	11·1	6·2	73·0	1·8	12·2	4·7	18·7
Bilaspur	2·1	65·6	4·1	5·2	77·0	1·4	8·9	6·5	16·8
Sambalpur	1·4	53·6	12·8	0·5	68·3	1·1	14·9	10·9	26·9
TOTAL CENTRAL PROVINCES...	2·5	43·0	7·6	10·3	63·4	2·4	18·7	7·3	28·4

So far as proprietors are concerned, the Nimar District, in which all the older cultivators were made proprietors of their plots, is distinguished from the rest; otherwise there is little to remark, but it is noticeable that in Saugor and Damoh the number of proprietors is proportionately large when it is considered that plot proprietors are insignificant in these districts. With large coparcenary bodies which are now commoner in these districts than elsewhere, the smaller sharers are merely of the status of cultivators.

* It is believed that in Wardha, many persons who combine industry with labour were included in labourers.

The statistics relating to cultivators show that in the Plateau Districts and in Chhattisgarh the distinction between the tenant and the labourer is not so well defined as in the other districts of the Provinces; similarly, the small numbers on personal service and engaged in industries are another indication of the backwardness of the same tracts.

The proportion of field labourers to general labourers is liable to variation according to the vagaries of the census staff, and both these classes with farm servants should be classed together to gain a true idea of the total labouring population.

Summary of the preceding tables.

Probably the best means of judging of the standard of comfort, and therefore of the resources, of the people of each district is to compare the number of persons engaged in personal service, industries and commerce to every hundred of the agricultural and labouring population. In a Province where there are few large manufactures, and manufactured produce is exported to a limited degree, the numbers and welfare of the industrial and trading classes are largely dependent on the condition of the agricultural and labouring classes. This and the previous tests may be conveniently considered together in bringing to a conclusion this sketch of the people of the Central Provinces:—

District.	Number of square miles per town or large village.	Number of persons engaged in personal service, industry and commerce, to every hundred of the agricultural and labouring population.	Percentage on total population of aboriginal tribes.
Nagpur	153	66·5	6·2
Wardha	221	30·3	11·4
Narsinghpur	274	50·0	13·2
Hoshangabad	520	44·3	20·1
Jubbulpore	564	45·6	24·9
Bhandara	564	43·6	15·0
Saugor	572	48·5	8·2
Nimar	671	46·8	14·5
Chanda	767	49·4	25·2
Chhindwara	772	32·2	40·4
Damoh	943	50·0	11·3
Balaghat	1,046	27·1	26·6
Betul	1,275	26·4	39·5
Seoni	1,559	24·3	43·4
Sambalpur	1,649	21·4	30·3
Bilaspur	1,668	13·3	17·8
Raipur	2,943	19·2	20·7
Mandla	5,056	16·4	60·3

Of these three columns of figures, all of which indicate the relative wealth of the people in the various districts, the second may be said to be a rough measure of the resources of the agricultural population, the first, of the ease or difficulty with which distress can be recognized or relieved, and the third of the reluctance or readiness of the people to avail themselves of relief. Differences in the character of the seasons which each district has experienced have of course been one of the principal factors governing the extent of distress, and the state of communications affects the facilities of giving relief; but nothing can indicate more clearly than this table how diverse are the circumstances of the various parts of the Provinces, and how impossible it would be to expect an equal degree of success in all districts in the matter of famine administration. Further than this, nearly every district in the Provinces contains areas of remote or hilly country which present exactly the same features of difficulty that mark the districts lowest in the scale, and so it may happen that in some remote corner of a district which is not hard pressed the conditions of distress may deepen into famine for a while unnoticed. The transition is often very rapid, the line of demarcation ill-defined. The dwellers in the populous plains when distress comes on them will crowd to the towns, or make their wants known by plundering a bazar; but the dwellers in the jungle—to anticipate in a great measure the experience of the famine—make no sign; their instincts lead them to cling yet more closely to the forests which they know. In such tracts and with such people the ordinary tests of distress will fail.

Agricultural Circumstances of the Province.

Agricultural features.

12. In 1892, when Mr. Fuller wrote his report (from which extracts have already been quoted), the Province may be considered to have reached the highest point yet attained in the advance of prosperity, and in the following brief description of its leading agricultural features account will be taken of the effects of the interval of depression which following that year has since gradually deepened in intensity as one unfavourable season has succeeded another.

There are, roughly speaking, four distinct kinds of agricultural lands in the Province:—

(i) The deep black soil lands, suitable for the growth of cold weather crops, but less suited for cotton and autumn millets owing to the water-logging of the heavy soil in the rainy season.

(ii) The shallower black soils, which, owing to their shallowness or the lightness of the rainfall, are best suited for the growth of cotton, juar (*sorghum vulgare*) and other autumn crops.

(iii) The light sandy and stony lands, which are chiefly devoted to the hill millets and inferior oil-seeds, but will give light outturns of coarse rice if the rainfall is sufficient.

(iv) The regular rice lands, where rainfall is heavy and the black soil is largely replaced by yellow soil formed from metamorphic instead of from trappean rock.

In lands of the first description the crops are dependent on the moisture remaining in the ground from the monsoon rainfall and on the showers which are usually received in the months of December and January. Water is generally only found at a great depth from the surface, and irrigation is consequently little resorted to. In the absence of irrigation, manure is of small advantage, and there is little scope for special industry or improvement. Embankments to save erosion and hold up water in fields which require it, and careful tillage, are the main

requisites for cultivation. Land of this kind is the main characteristic of the Nerbudda Valley and the open and level portions of the Vindhyan and Satpura plateaux.

The second class of lands, those specially suited for the growth of cotton and autumn crops other than rice, are found in all districts except those of Chhattisgarh, but those in which they predominate are Nimar, Wardha, west Nagpur and south Chhindwara. In them the soil responds readily to manure, and the application of industry largely increases the outturn. The cultivators of these tracts are usually the most industrious and intelligent.

The lands of the third class are the poorest in the Province; they require long resting fallows, and the cheap millets which they produce, constituting the main food-grain of the aboriginal cultivators who raise them, are entirely dependent on the rainfall of August and September. The hilly and jungle tracts of the Vindhyan, Satpura, and Nerbudda Valley geographical divisions contribute most largely to this class.

The last class of land is the principal feature of the Wainganga and Mahanadi Districts, including south Balaghat, Bhandara and Chanda and the three districts of Chhattisgarh. These form the great rice tracts of the Provinces. In the first three the rice is largely irrigated and transplanted, and in the last three mostly unirrigated and sown broadcast. In these districts after-cropping largely prevails, pulses and linseed being sown in the moist soil of the rice-fields before the rice is harvested, and growing up and bearing a crop after it is removed.

Food of the people.

13. The food usually consumed by the rural population, as might be expected, generally consists of the food most readily produced in the tract which they inhabit. Thus in the rice districts rice and pulses are the common diet, and juar in the tracts which produce that millet. But wherever juar or gram are grown side by side with wheat even though in less proportion, the tendency is for the poorer classes to consume the cheaper grains, disposing of the more valuable crop in order to obtain cash for paying their rents and debts and purchasing such commodities as they require. Generally speaking even the poorest add pulse to their daily food, whether it consist of rice, wheat or juar. Even in the wild hilly tracts where the food of the aboriginal races chiefly consists of the coarse millets, kodon and kutki, the diet is supplemented by maize and beans produced in the back gardens which are the principal feature of aboriginal villages. This fare, as already stated, is helped out with *mahua* and forest fruits and roots, a class of food which is used even by superior classes in times of need. In the towns where the well-to-do consume rice and wheat, whatever may be the staple grain of the district, it is easier to gain an idea of the state of the food supply; but in rural areas where much of the food consists of maize and the minor grains and millets, which are not regularly exposed for sale in the markets, it is often impossible to gauge the state of stocks by price quotations. This difficulty is naturally greatest in those tracts where these minor food-stuffs are practically the sole article of diet.

When high prices prevail and distress increases, the people are driven to resort to the cheapest food, and persons used to wheat and gram will be found subsisting on rice or juar; but in the initial stages of distress people, especially those of the towns, are often found to prefer a short allowance of food to a change of diet which is uncongenial to them.

The food of the hunting tribes in which grain forms but a slight part has already been described.

14. The information given above as to the system of cropping and the staple foods can be more readily appreciated from the table below, which also

contains a column showing the average rainfall of the various districts before it was effected by the abnormal seasons which followed 1892:—

District.	Average rainfall.	Percentage of Cultivated Area.					
		Under cold weather crops.	Under cotton and superior autumn millets.	Under hill millets.	Under rice.	Irrigated.	Double-cropped.
Non-rice Districts.	Inches.						
Saugor ...	45	72	6	5	2	1	1
Damoh ...	49	61	6	11	10	0·5	2
Jubbulpore ...	58	59	4	15	16	...	6
Mandla ...	52	33	...	40	15	...	6
Seoni ...	53	47	3	19	13	3	3
Narsinghpur ...	51	58	6	11	4	...	1
Hoshangabad ...	51	65	6	6	2	...	0·5
Nimar ...	33	9	58	1	2	2	2
Betul ...	44	43	9	22	2	1	1
Chhindwara ...	44	39	25	10	...	1	...
Wardha ...	42	36	54	...	...	...	...
Nagpur ...	46	42	32	...	2	2	1
Average ...	47	47	17	12	5	2	3
Rice Districts.							
Chanda ...	50	42	13	...	26	22	3
Bhandara ...	55	29	3	1	64	29	19
Balaghat ...	65	19	...	3	77	23	24
Raipur ...	52	32	1	6	56	1	19
Bilaspur ...	47	29	1	4	59	4	16
Sambalpur ...	59	1	3	...	77	6	1
Average ...	55	23	4	2·5	59	14	14

Influence of rainfall.

15. This table shows that as regards autumn crops, rice requires a rainfall approaching 60 inches, while cotton and juar do not prosper very well if the rainfall exceeds 45 inches. For the cold weather crops the amount of the rainfall of the previous monsoon is less material.

Importance of September and October rain.

The rainfall of June, July and August is of course essential to the cultivation of autumn crops, as it is during these months that the seed is sown in the moistened soil and, in rice tracts, transplantation carried out; but to bring these crops to maturity the rainfall of September and October is what is most important, upon which the outturn of the harvests entirely depends. And the character of the rainfall of the same two months determines the successful sowing and germination of the cold weather crops. These months as affecting the crops of both seasons are consequently the most critical of the whole year.

The average fall of these two months up to 1892 in the various districts of the Provinces was as follows :—

District.	September.	October.	Total.	Percentage to total of year.
Saugor	6·45	1·29	7·74	17
Damoh	9·16	2·06	11·22	23
Jubbulpore	9·81	1·52	11·33	20
Mandia	5·48	1·37	6·85	13
Seoni	8·03	1·83	9·86	18
Narsinghpur	6·38	1·42	7·80	16
Hoshangabad	8·30	1·40	9·20	19
Nimar	5·55	1·13	6·68	20
Betul	6·37	2·06	8·43	19
Chhindwara	9·82	2·35	12·17	27
Wardha	8·34	2·42	10·76	25
Nagpur	8·48	2·38	10·86	23
Chanda	6·31	1·91	8·22	16
Bhandara	9·35	1·40	10·75	19
Balaghat	10·06	1·47	11·53	17
Raipur	6·59	1·95	8·54	16
Bilaspur	8·13	1·58	9·71	21
Sambalpur	9·19	2·02	11·21	19

It will be observed that the rice districts have entirely lost the ascendancy in the matter of rainfall exhibited by them in the last table, and that from 8 to 10 inches is a common fall in all districts, the extremes ranging from 7 to 12.

November rain.

November rain is never required unless the rain of two previous months has been deficient, and even then it does as much damage to ripening and harvested crops as it does good to the young spring crops. It is specially disastrous if it follows a wet October, both spoiling the autumn crops and laying the foundation for rust to the wheat crop. November rain is uncommon, and the average for the various districts only equals from a quarter to half an inch.

Cold weather rains.

Of the cold weather rains the showers of December and January are the most beneficial. February rain comes too late if previous drought has prevailed, and, if the preceding months have been at all rainy, it gives a final blow to the damage wrought. Rain early in February may, however, be beneficial in the Satpura and Northern districts, where the crops are later. March rain damages the ripening crops when still uncut, and injures the harvested produce exposed ready for threshing.

Failures of rain in previous years, and opinions of authorities.

16. During the 30 years which followed the formation of the Provinces in 1862, the only year in which anything approaching to famine conditions prevailed was 1868-69, when long breaks of over a month separated the falls of June, July and August. But a heavy fall in September saved something of the autumn crops, and enabled a moderate spring harvest to be reaped, although the winter rains failed.

The first year after 1868 in which serious fears were entertained of scarcity was 1886, when a protracted break in August and September, which reduced the outturn of rice and the hill millets to a little over a third of the normal, was followed by excessive rain in the cold weather months, causing damage by frost and rust. But in this year again a heavy fall in October saved the autumn crops from complete ruin, and the losses in the case of the winter crops were only partial.

The rainfall of 1868-69 ranged between 25 and 30 inches, and in the Revenue Administration Report relating to that year it was said: "In all accessible record and tradition, there is no trace of so short a rainfall as that of 1868, and the ill consequences of this failure have been intensified by its universality. All previous disturbances of the seasons have been, so far as is known, partial and irregular in their range, and indeed up to a certain point this was almost a necessary consequence of the great variety in the climatic conditions of the Province."

This was then, and up to the time of the present calamity has continued to be, the general belief of those familiar with the history of the Province, namely, that its agriculture was practically secure by reason of the regularity of the rainfall.

Even to the mature experience and the clear perception of the Famine Commissioners it seemed that the Central Provinces were humanly speaking secure from any widespread calamity. They wrote (Report, Part II, Chapter I, paragraph 12):—

> In the greater part of the country the rainfall has never been known to fail, and no part of India is freer from any apprehension of the calamity of drought than are the Central Provinces and Berar.

The same views still held good 14 years later, in 1892, when Mr. Fuller wrote his Report on the progress of the Province, and the following passage correctly reflects them:—

> During the last 30 years the Provinces have suffered but little from failure of rainfall, and it would seem that they are tolerably secure from great misfortune in this respect. Their position enables them to profit by the Bengal as well as the Bombay monsoon current, and indeed it would seem that their southern districts share to some extent in the current which reaches the Madras coast in October. Their hills and forests are of immense assistance in condensation, and it may be due to this cause that in both years of scarcity—1868 and 1886—things were rescued from desperation by timely falls of rain in the late autumn, which enabled ryots who had lost their monsoon crops to sow for the spring harvest.

17. The above extracts indicate how past experience engendered security. It was not indeed uncommon for heavy rain in the autumn months to damage cotton or superior millets, and spring crops have suffered in turn from excessive or defective moisture in the cold weather months. But losses consequent on these causes had been partial, confined to particular localities or particular soils. Conditions which injured one crop, benefited another. Such partial and local failures occasioned no serious anxiety. Communications were annually improving and general wealth increasing. In the plains the resources of the people were ample to tide them over a single year's misfortunes, while in the hills, where the inhabitants were shiftless, there were the forests to fall back upon. Past serious disasters (of which the last occurred in 1868), never very widespread, became to the people themselves but a dim memory. Of the officers administering the Province there were few, if any, by whom a visitation of famine was not regarded as an extremely remote contingency, and who had themselves had experience in gauging the signs of its advent. Actual experience showed that of the various normal vicissitudes, excessive rather than defective rain had been the most frequent, but in spite of these vicissitudes very material progress had up to 1892 been attained.

General impression of security.

The following figures, which relate to the surveyed tracts—that is, to all the Province except the Zamindari estates of Chanda, Chhattisgarh and Chhindwara—show the extent of this progress. For the unsurveyed tracts detailed

figures are not available, but it is known that they have progressed to a still greater degree:—

	Acreage under Crops.	
	In 1867-68.	Average in 1892.
Rice	3,376,287	4,000,000
Wheat	3,304,545	4,100,000
Other food-grains	4,761,098	5,000,000
Oil-seeds	781,088	1,806,000
Cotton	666,065	795,000
Other crops	247,585	805,000
Total ...	12,921,898	16,506,000
Double-cropped ...	300,000	1,000,000
Area actually cropped ...	12,621,898	15,506,000

Such were the general beliefs as to the security of agriculture in the Central Provinces; the history of the subsequent seasons will show how these beliefs have been dispelled, until at last programmes of relief works and the provisions of the Famine Code from possessing merely an academic interest to the administrators of the Province have become a part of their daily life.

History of the Seasons which followed the year 1892.

Weather cycles.

18. Up till 1892 it was not uncommon for a wet year to succeed a dry, but such unusual features were confined to one year at a time. Since 1892 the climate has become abnormal by cycles. The years 1892-93 to 1894-95 have been wet, the years 1895-96 to 1897-98 have been dry.

(*a*).—*The cycle of wet years.*

Abnormal features of 1893.

19. In the first of the wet years, 1892-93, there was no general damage to autumn crops, but there was excessive rain in September and October in the Nagpur country, which did a good deal of injury to those crops, as well as to the rice in parts of Bhandara. Elsewhere, however, crops were fair. On the top of the heavy autumn rains, however, came a most abnormal fall in the first three months of 1893; indeed, at the beginning of March the weather resembled that usually experienced in the monsoons. In the districts of the Jubbulpore Division the fall averaged from 5 to 7 inches. In the Nerbudda and Satpura Districts it was somewhat lighter, and also in Chhattisgarh, but in the Nagpur Districts the falls were extraordinary, as the following statement shows:—

	Fall of January, February and March.	
	Average.	1893.
Wardha	1·81	9·04
Nagpur	1·35	7·49
Chanda	1·53	17·47
Bhandara	1·78	9·26
Balaghat	1·35	5·35

The result of these abnormal rains was to cause rust to the wheat; but the falls coming when the crops were beginning to ripen, the damage was rather to the quality than the quantity of the grain. The greatest losses to the spring crops occurred in the districts of Damoh, Seoni and Bilaspur, and in the Wainganga Districts where, however, they are not of much importance.

Abnormal features and losses in 1893-94 and 1894-95.

20. The climate of the two following years was closely similar; heavy falls in September, October and November seriously injured the autumn crops, and delayed the sowings or swamped the seedlings of the spring crops, rendering them particularly susceptible to fungoid disease. The clouds and moist warm atmosphere of the cold weather months, though unaccompanied by much rain, completed the havoc, rust ravaged the wheat and linseed, and insects attacked the pulses. The greatest losses during these two years occurred in the Vindhyan Districts and Jubbulpore in the north of the Province, and in the Wainganga Districts in the south. The Nerbudda Valley and Nagpur country suffered next in severity, while Nimar, the Satpura Districts and Chhattisgarh escaped with comparatively small loss. Of the second, the western did better than the eastern, and of the last, while Bilaspur fared poorly, Sambalpur enjoyed bountiful rice crops.

The abnormal character of the rainfall of these two years, and the results on the harvests, may be best understood from the table given below:—

District.	Normal fall of September, October and November up to 1892.	Actual fall of these months in		Cold weather rains.			Outturn of all crops 100=full.		Remarks.
		1893-94.	1894-95.	Normal up to 1892.	Actuals of		1893-94.	1894-95.	
					1893-94.	1894-95.			
Saugor ...	9·10	18·73	17·61	1·64	1·85	4·81	31	39	Wheat and linseed totally destroyed by rust in 1894.
Damoh ...	11·94	26·51	14·02	1·36	4·30	3·57	45	41	
Jubbulpore ...	12·35	22·10	17·29	2·25	0·93	3·35	55	42	Very serious loss to spring crops in 1895.
Mandla ...	7·67	17·55	13·78	2·33	0·24	5·15	71	76	
Seoni ...	11·10	12·47	17·80	2·64	1·07	1·81	71	63	
Narsinghpur ...	10·49	9·95	18·59	1·61	2·49	2·40	66	42	Very serious losses to wheat in 1895.
Hoshangabad ...	10·76	13·37	19·23	1·09	1·03	2·38	56	42	
Nimar ...	7·05	4·67	12·87	1·91	0·44	0·41	77	73	
Betul ...	10·34	14·37	20·12	1·70	0·55	1·43	60	71	
Chhindwara ...	13·09	6·02	21·98	2·02	1·42	1·36	89	77	
Wardha ...	11·73	13·05	16·75	1·35	*Nil*	1·83	54	51	
Nagpur ...	12·01	16·83	20·75	1·81	0·28	1·56	69	45	Damages evenly distributed for all crops in 1895.
Chanda ...	9·72	15·20	11·91	1·53	1·22	1·42	44	53	Damage to rice in 1894 believed to have been overstated.
Bhandara ...	12·10	18·09	13·57	1·78	1·58	0·11	53	48	Spring crops unimportant, rice poor, but no total destruction.
Balaghat ...	12·46	29·18	20·54	1·35	1·26	1·30	50	55	
Raipur ...	9·20	12·35	13·69	1·53	0·32	0·09	88	72	Rice crops good all through, but considerable damage in 1895 to spring crops.
Bilaspur ...	10·50	14·73	17·60	1·69	*Nil*	3·53	72	66	
Sambalpur ...	12·18	17·56	10·99	1·88	1·44	0·71	89	87	Rice about 80 per cent.; did very well. No spring crops worth mentioning.

The crops of any agricultural year affect the condition of the people during the calendar year in which the spring crops are reaped, and consequently the crops of 1893-94 influenced the circumstances of the people in 1894, and those of 1894-95 in 1895. It may also be asserted that, if losses are evenly distributed and food stocks are normal, an outturn which does not fall below 40 per cent. will not occasion severe distress, provided that the area of scarcity has not extended over

very large tracts of the surrounding country; and it is in this light that the effect of the failures of these two years will now be examined.

THE YEAR 1894.

Extent of distress in 1894.

21. Applying the test just stated above, it will at once be apparent from the table last given that the only districts likely to suffer severe distress in 1894 were Saugor and Damoh, where the chief staple, wheat, totally failed, and that elsewhere in Chanda alone was there any cause for anxiety.

The case of Chanda may be dismissed at once; the poor were put to some straits at the close of the rains, but prices continued moderate; some road works started by the Deputy Commissioner failed to attract labourers in any numbers, and with the early rice harvest in October all pressure disappeared.

In Saugor and Damoh it was otherwise; the crops totally failed over 60 per cent. of the cultivated area in Saugor, and over 45 per cent. in Damoh, the disaster being concentrated in the wheat-growing tracts.

Relief measures in Saugor and Damoh.

22. Action was at once taken to organize relief. The forests were thrown open for the free collection of fuel, grass and edible produce, and for the free grazing of agricultural cattle. Relief works were opened for the labouring poor, and for the relief of cultivators the whole of the June instalment of land revenue was suspended, the introduction of the new Settlement in Damoh being at the same time postponed. An allotment of five lakhs of rupees for seed advances (*takávi*) was also made to the two districts.

Experience proved that the districts were possessed of considerable food-stocks, for the amount imported up to the close of the rains for food and seed was only about 4,000 tons, while prices did not rise to any serious extent. This is shown by the following statement:—

Period.	PRICES IN SEERS PER RUPEE.			
	SAUGOR.		DAMOH.	
	Wheat.	Gram.	Wheat.	Gram.
Average prices of five preceding years ...	13·60	16·80	16·75	20·25
15th February 1893 ...	12·70	16·47	17·15	18·50
„ „ 1894 ...	14·54	22·40	16·10	20·00
15th May 1893 ...	13·73	16·47	16·10	18·69
„ „ 1894 ...	12·36	19·00	12·75	18·00
15th August 1893 ...	14·16	19·01	18·70	26·00
„ „ 1894 ...	11·23	19·00	10·55	15·00
15th November 1893 ...	15·45	24·73	18·70	26·00
„ „ 1894 ...	11·23	19·00	10·30	15·00

In Saugor gram was cheap and wheat did not rise very seriously. In Damoh the price of wheat was rather high during the rains, but gram continued obtainable at a moderate price. It had been exceptionally cheap in the previous year.

A further indication that distress was not very severe was that at no time did the numbers on the special road works exceed 11,600 in Saugor and 4,200 in Damoh. Day labourers and the smaller artizans alone resorted to the works, but it was found generally that the men obtained employment elsewhere, and sent their women and children to the works. The works continued open from April to October in Saugor and until November in Damoh. Gratuitous relief was left to private charity. The total expenditure on relief was about a lakh of rupees, of which Rs. 73,000 was a charge on Provincial Funds.

The mortality of 1894 was 42 *per mille* in both districts, a rate which is often reached in unhealthy years. It may be added that, as a result of the liberal suspensions of revenue and the *takávi* advances granted to the cultivating classes, the area in cultivation in Damoh fell by only 3,000 acres, or a half per cent., while in Saugor the cultivated area actually increased by $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The general conclusion was that the people had come well out of the disaster, and had shown themselves to be possessed of greater resources than had been supposed.

THE YEAR 1895.

Situation and measures adopted in 1895.

23. In the year 1895, again applying the test explained in paragraph 20 to the outturn statement given in the same paragraph, affairs were nowhere so critical as in 1894. No such total destruction of any important crop occurred. But, on the other hand, there was some cause for anxiety in the districts of Jubbulpore, Narsinghpur and Hoshangabad, where the wheat crop suffered severely. Attention was mainly concentrated on Saugor and Damoh, as their losses followed on a failure in the previous year. The situation was, however, so far mitigated that the autumn crops on which the poorest of the people depend had given fair yields, and when the Commissioner of Settlements and the Commissioner of the Division had carefully examined the situation in consultation with the Deputy Commissioners of those districts, it was considered by the Chief Commissioner that no necessity existed for organizing regular relief.

Saugor.

In Saugor the position of affairs had in comparison with the previous year improved, and it was found unnecessary to make any fresh suspensions. Suspended arrears due for collection were remitted and the introduction of the revised Settlement postponed. This, with the opening of the forests for the free collection of edible products, dry wood and grass, and free grazing for agricultural cattle, was found to be sufficient.

Damoh.

In Damoh the areas growing autumn crops had done fairly well, and the losses were again concentrated in spring crop areas. For the affected areas more radical measures were necessary, and the whole of the suspended arrears of the previous year were remitted, while half the current demand was in turn suspended. Forest concessions were granted as had been done in Saugor; and in addition a test work was opened in April in the neighbourhood of Damoh, a minimum wage being prescribed. The work was open for 30 days, but directly ordinary Public Works road work was offered in the vicinity on contract terms, the people forsook the test work, and the occurrence of a local holiday reduced numbers from 700 to 132. Thereafter it was decided by Sir John Woodburn to resort to ordinary works only. Numbers on these rose from 1,500 to 2,000, but no further. Metal collection furnished employment throughout the rains on the road from Damoh to Hatta, which passes through the heart of the affected region. Waifs and strays found shelter in poor-houses maintained by private charity. Two of these were open for seven months, April to October, and one for two months. The inmates averaged 465, the sum subscribed for their support being Rs. 3,600.

Jubbulpore.

In Jubbulpore suspensions of about three lakhs of rupees of land revenue were granted to the people of the rich wheat tracts which had suffered most. The District Funds spent Rs. 64,000 on road works, in addition to the sum spent on roads from the ordinary Public Works Budget. In the poorer portions of the district the autumn crops had yielded sufficient to preclude food scarcity.

Nerbudda Valley.

In Narsinghpur and Hoshangabad the forests were opened to the free collection of edible produce, dry wood and grass, and additional road work was provided during the rains, at an expenditure of Rs. 33,000 in the former, and Rs. 42,000 in the latter district. These two measures were of great assistance to the labouring classes. The circumstances of the cultivators were closely examined by the Settlement Officer of Hoshangabad and the Deputy Commissioner of Narsinghpur, and no formal suspensions were found necessary. The time of stress for the labouring class was in the rains, between the intervals of agricultural employment; the Deputy Commissioner of Narsinghpur had it widely proclaimed throughout the district that work was obtainable at Narsinghpur, but no one from any distance came, not half a dozen applicants being drawn from a distance of more than 10 miles. The district road works in Hoshangabad had attracted 12,700 people in August, but by the close of September numbers had fallen below 4,000. Gratuitous relief from private charity was dispensed in Hoshangabad and Harda, but its chief result was to attract beggars from across the Bhopal border.

Prices and mortality in 1895.

24. In all the above districts, Deputy Commissioners reported reduction of resources in the case of the cultivating classes, and considerable privation among the labouring poor. And the policy of the Administration in confining its intervention to indirect relief in the manner described above, when considered in the light of the price and mortality statistics given below, appears to have been justified :—

Prices and Mortality in 1895.

	Saugor.		Damoh.		Jubbulpore.		Narsinghpur.		Hoshangabad.	
	Wheat.	Gram.	Wheat.	Gram.	Wheat	Gram.	Wheat.	Gram.	Wheat.	Gram.
February 15th ...	11¾	17⅜	12½	15½	13	16½	13	16	14¾	16½
May 15th ...	11¾	18¾	12½	18¾	14¼	19¼	13	16	13⅘	16½
August 15th ...	11¾	17⅜	11½	15	12	17	13	16	14¼	16
November 15th ...	11¾	19	11½	15	12½	14⅝	13	16	13⅘	16¾
	Per mille.		*Per mille.*		*Per mille.*		*Per mille.*		*Per mille.*	
Mortality during 1895.	51·86		45·36		40·66		53·45		46·08	
Excluding cholera and small-pox.	49·45		43·10		38·16		47·25		42·29	

That many persons owing to the hard times fell victims to diseases from which they would otherwise have recovered is very possibly the case, but the figures preclude the existence of famine conditions ; the year was everywhere an unhealthy one, and it may be mentioned that in Nimar, where no distress prevailed, the mortality, exclusive of cholera, was 50 *per mille,* or higher than in any of the districts affected by bad crops.

Summary of the cycle of wet years.

25. With the close of the agricultural year 1894-95 ended the cycle of wet years which had borne severely upon the harvests of the Province. Within the districts most affected, the greatest damage was done to those with the best lands, bearing the commercially valuable spring crops, who were in normal times the best off. The poorer cultivators of the uplands and forest tracts all escaped serious misfortune in the case of their own crops, and the chief effect which the losses of their richer neighbours had upon them was in the diminished harvest earnings and the partial contraction of employment. This was made up to them by giving them free access to minor forest produce, and increasing the employment available on road work. And there were no indications that more help was needed.

(*b*).—*The cycle of dry years.*

Character of the seasons in 1895-96.

26. With the year 1895-96 came a reversal of the situation ; this was a year of drought, and the burden of loss was shifted on to the poorer soils which bear the autumn food-crops, and hence

on to the poorer cultivators. The progress of the monsoon of 1895 was anxiously watched. It commenced early and continued with seasonable breaks till the middle of September, after which it abruptly terminated; for the rest of that month most of the districts received no rain at all, and where rain fell, it was partial and badly distributed. Thereafter, except for some showers in the southern districts at the close of October, universal drought prevailed to the end of the agricultural year. Of the autumn crops, rice and the hill millets suffered the most, cotton and sesamum (til) gave good yields, while juar (*sorghum vulgare*) and tur (*cajanus indicus*) bore a fair outturn. The effects of the drought on the winter crops were shown in diminished sowings, defective germination, and withering of the young seedlings on high lands or in poor soils. Much loss was caused in this manner during the hot cloudless days of October, November and the early part of December, but in the second half of the last month and during January a period of clear cold weather with heavy dews considerably revived the drooping crops; the plants began to tiller, and eventually the spring outturns averaged about half the normal on a diminished area. Of the deficiency a part was made up by the larger areas devoted to autumn crops, but the net reduction, inclusive of after-cropping, amounted to about 700,000 acres over the Province as a whole.

A similar table to that exhibited in paragraph 26 will show the abnormal character of the rainfall and the effect on the crops. There was no cold weather rain.

District.	Rainfall of September, October and November.			Outturn (100 = full crop on normal area).		Remarks.
	Normal.	Average of 2 previous wet years.	Actual fall of 1895-96.	Average of 2 previous years.	Actual of 1895-96.	
Saugor ...	9·10	18·17	4·00	35	42	Three successive bad years.
Damoh ...	11·94	20·26	2·95	43	34	Do. do.
Jubbulpore ...	12·35	19·70	1·53	48	39	Two do. do.
Mandla ...	7·67	16 66	2·98	74	44	First really bad year.
Seoni ...	11·10	15·64	5·76	67	54	Three poor years out of four.
Narsinghpur ...	10·49	14·27	2·85	54	61	Previous year bad.
Hoshangabad ...	10·76	16·30	4·39	49	54	Do. do.
Nimar ..	7·05	8·32	4·82	75	73	All years fair.
Betul ...	10·34	17·25	4·38	69	47	First really bad year.
Chhindwara ...	13·09	14·00	3·81	83	66	Previous years fairly good.
Wardha	11·73	14·95	5·68	53	74	Two previous years poor.
Nagpur ...	12·01	18·79	4·63	57	71	Preceding year bad.
Chanda ...	9·72	13·56	7·90	48	64	Of last three years, one bad and two poor.
Bhandara ...	12·10	15·83	4·32	46	44	Two previous years poor.
Balaghat ..	12·46	24·86	3·94	52	52	Do. do.
Raipur ..	9·20	13·02	2·54	80	44	Previous years good.
Bilaspur ...	10·50	16·16	2·89	69	39	Of the last three years, first two good, third rather poor.
Sambalpur ...	12·18	14·28	4·78	88	70	All three preceding years good.

THE YEAR 1896.

Apprehensions of distress in various districts.

27. The statement set out in the last paragraph clearly shows where distress was first likely to appear. The position was most serious in Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore, where the past losses had been severe; and cause existed for anxiety in the hilly regions of Mandla, Betul and Seoni, where the hill millets predominate, for although previous years in these districts had not been bad, the resources of the inhabitants of such tracts cannot be relied on to support even a single year's complete failure. In the Wainganga rice districts there was also ground for apprehension in Bhandara and Balaghat, and more especially in the Baihar Tahsil or upland portion of the latter district, where the people are aboriginals and very poor. The Nerbudda Valley Districts were better off than in the previous year, but the hilly portions of these might require assistance. In Raipur and Bilaspur the previous good years removed the fears that might otherwise have been felt. In the rest of the Province there was no probability of distress.

It was at the close of December, before the situation had as yet fully developed, that Sir Charles Lyall took over the charge of the Provinces from Sir John Woodburn. Information was in process of collection from District Officers as to the areas and outturns of the autumn crops. It was known that the areas devoted to these crops had been above the average, and that the yields had been very short, but the harvest operations were yielding food and employment, and the note of alarm had not yet been sounded. It was also known that the *rabi* or spring crop sowings were short, and that there had been defective germination, but it was yet quite possible that winter rains would enable a moderately good outturn to be reaped. At the same time prices continued easy, and showed no tendency to rise. In the wheat districts wheat was selling at from 11 to 15 seers to the rupee, and gram at 15 to 17 seers. Where juar was the principal food-grain, prices ranged between 16 and 20 seers, and in the rice districts between 12 and 18 seers of rice were procurable.

The Chief Commissioner therefore devoted the first two months after his arrival to visiting the southern districts, where he satisfied himself that no relief measures were likely to be needed, and arrived at Jubbulpore at the close of February.

History of events in the Jubbulpore Division.

28. In the history of events after the Chief Commissioner's arrival at Jubbulpore, the affairs of the districts of the Jubbulpore Division, where the situation was graver than elsewhere, must claim the first place, the case of the other parts of the Province being dealt with subsequently. Up to this time no actual distress had been reported from the Jubbulpore Division. The Commissioner, who had just returned from a tour in Mandla and Seoni, found that there was then no ground for alarm in those districts. In Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore it was expected that distress would develope with the termination of harvesting operations. A few wanderers in a reduced condition had been seen on the road from Damoh to Jubbulpore, and advances had been given to the Police with orders to relieve such persons and to send them on to places where they could find work. The construction of the Saugor-Katni extension of the Indian Midland Railway, which traverses all the three districts, and on which work had commenced on the 1st January, was expected to meet the demand for employment. But this very work was found to have indirectly caused severe local distress at Murwara, where it transpired that the news of the construction of the railway had attracted thither many labourers, principally from the neighbouring Native States * of Rewa and Bundelkhand, before the actual work of construction had commenced. These people were thrown on their own resources during November and December and had taken to begging in the town of Murwara, where a private poor-house had been opened. During this time of enforced idleness many of them became reduced in strength, while others had preferred to pick up what they could by occasional work and begging to the

* A census taken at the time, of these persons, shows that of 150 inmates of the private poor-house, only 64 belonged to the Central Provinces, and of 518 begging in the towns, only 284 were residents of the Central Provinces.

severer labour which work on the railway entailed. The Commissioner of Settlements and the Commissioner of the Division were sent to Murwara to examine the situation there, and on their return a Conference was held at Jubbulpore, at which the Deputy Commissioners of Saugor and Damoh attended. It was decided at this Conference that the Jubbulpore and Murwara poor-houses should be taken over as a public charge. Tank work was opened at Murwara, at which persons fed in the poor-house could be put to light work until they were fit to pass on to the railway work, 12 miles distant. Private works in this tahsil were also started to help the labouring classes. Save for the special circumstance occasioned by this influx of people at Murwara, immediate pressure was not being felt in Jubbulpore or in Saugor and Damoh. It was calculated that the harvest earnings would yield a month's food-supply (or about half the normal amount) and that the *mahua* crop and the edible produce which the forests (which were thrown open for its free collection) would yield would be an additional support. The condition of the people being thus improved, they would be able to find work on the railway, where there was abundant occupation for all who sought it. The Deputy Commissioners of Saugor and Damoh were of opinion that for the present the railway would suffice as a means of employment, but they received instructions to arrange for roads in parts of their districts which were distant from the railway, and to open poor-houses as the need arose. The concession of throwing open the forests for edible produce, and for grass and dry wood wherever the demand for fodder and fuel made this concession valuable, was also extended to Mandla and part of Seoni to help the aboriginal population, whose small millet crop had been very short.

Action taken during the hot weather.

The view that distress was as yet slight was supported by the statistics of the private poor-house which had been maintained in Jubbulpore since the previous September. The inmates had gradually diminished since the *kharif* harvest had begun, from 673 in September to 102 in March.

Prices continued steady in Saugor, rose but very slightly in Damoh, and fell in Jubbulpore during March and April, and a marked improvement was reported in the condition of the labouring classes. As the hot weather advanced, and the harvest earnings and *mahua* crop began to be exhausted, road and tank work was extended in Jubbulpore, road work was opened in Damoh and Saugor to meet the necessities of those who lived at a distance from the railway works, and a poor-house was opened at Damoh. By the end of May the numbers on railway, road and tank work or supported in poor-houses were as follows :—

	Railway.	Roads and tanks.	Total.	Supported in poor-houses.	Grand Total.
Saugor	9,240	1,395	10,635	...	10,635
Damoh	16,000	616	16 616	246	16 862
Jubbulpore	4 800	5,154	9,994	473	10,467
Total ...	30,040	7,165	37,245	719	37,964

In the meantime, on reports received from the Deputy Commissioners of the three districts, large suspensions of revenue were granted in Jubbulpore, and remissions in Saugor and Damoh. The amount of these concessions varied in these localities according to the circumstances of the crops, but was most extensive in Damoh, where all previous suspensions and half the current demand were remitted.

Suspensions and remissions of revenue.

29. Early in June the situation as it stood at the close of the hot weather was laid before the Government of India, and sanction was obtained to the revenue concessions granted, and to an additional allotment for *takávi* advances. The view urged was that these concessions and the extra employment offered on railway and road works, together with relief to wanderers and persons physically unfit,

Position of affairs at the beginning of the monsoon.

would, with the earnings which agricultural operations and monsoon repairs afford the people, suffice to tide them over the period intervening before the autumn crops were harvested, when, if, as was hoped, the season turned out favourably, all necessity for relief would pass away. Everything depended on the character of the monsoon, but the whole of the past history of the Province favoured the view that a second failure of the rainfall was in the highest degree improbable; and the experience now gained both in this Province and elsewhere shows that if the autumn crops had turned out well, distress would have rapidly passed away.

Extent of relief during the monsoon months.

30. The establishment of the monsoon brought about a change in the circumstances of the poorer classes. Able-bodied labourers left the works for agricultural employment, and some of these were closed, while beggars and people who had held aloof from work, picking up a subsistence in the villages during the open months and eking out their earnings with forest produce, began to flock into the towns. Poor-house relief was accordingly extended in Saugor and Damoh and Sehora in Jubbulpore, and town works were established at the chief centres in connection with the poor-houses. Seven such poor-houses were opened in the three districts by August. Towards the end of August maize and some of the earliest small millets were harvested, and the fortnightly reports spoke of some alleviation in consequence in the circumstances of the poor. In Jubbulpore, exclusive of municipal work, which gave employment to large numbers, there were road works open in affected portions of the district; two such works continued in Damoh in the north and south of the district at a distance from the railway as a test for the need of employment; and in Saugor similar work was provided in the tahsils of Banda and Khurai. In all these districts the railway work remained open and attracted considerable numbers.

The following figures show how the numbers fluctuated in the several districts:—

Fortnight ending	Saugor.			Damoh.			Jubbulpore.		
	Railway.	Roads.	Poor-houses.	Railway.	Roads.	Poor-houses.	Railway.	Roads and tanks.	Poor-houses.
June 6th ...	7,087	1,564	...	18,401	600	338	4,894	4,582	464
„ 20th ...	6,403	1,994	...	14,713	428	360	3,183	4,311	575
July 4th ...	4,272	1,545	829	12,522	252	497	2,527	3,102	1,004
„ 18th ...	4,770	1,195	1,017	11,805	206	650	2,951	3,430	1,482
August 1st ...	4,545	1,206	843	10,865	193	746	2,578	3,875	2,088
„ 15th ...	4,166	991	1,106	7,092	112	842	1,976	3,715	2,222
„ 29th ...	5,150	876	1,057	9,439	118	828	1,900	4,048	1,894
September 12th ...	6,004	880	1,119	10,047	42	767	2,295	4,609	2,048
„ 26th ...	6,650	934	1,338	8,930	41	985	2,000	3,691	1,776

This statement shows that the railway continued to be the chief means of employment except in Jubbulpore, where the municipal work of draining and levelling some insanitary tanks drew considerable numbers of labourers; but work on the roads failed to attract, and in Damoh the numbers on that form of employment dwindled to insignificance.

Affairs in Mandla.

31. In the meantime in Mandla relief was organized as distress began to show itself. The previous failures of crops had not been so serious as in the three richer districts; the people were accustomed to supplement their food with jungle produce, so that the concession of free edible produce was likely to be particularly serviceable here. During the hot weather the mortality, other than that due to cholera, was not high, and no acute distress was reported. The first fortnightly report dealing with the condition of the people up to the 9th May was reassuring. In some localities the condition of the labouring population was stated to be normal, in others the pressure was not severe. The Deputy Commissioner was authorized to start special road work as soon as the need arose. In the next fortnight there were signs of increasing distress, and road work was ordered, but cholera prevented a start till the 2nd of June. Three special roads were then started, in addition to some ordinary Public Works Department work, and tank work was opened in two places.

It was found that Gonds and other aboriginal races would not come readily to the works. They abstained altogether at first, and for a long time none came from any distance, but there was gradual improvement in this respect, and numbers rose as the rains advanced. No Government poor-house was opened in this district, as there was no such wandering of emaciated persons as had been noticed in the Vindhyan Districts and Jubbulpore, but a small private poor-house was started in Mandla itself, and the Church Missionary Society fed a number of persons in the town. In place of regular poor-houses, arrangements were made by which the Police were to bring in debilitated persons to the road works, to be fed there until they were fit for work. Deaths from starvation began to be reported in August and September, some of which were investigated, and in many instances these reports proved incorrect; but there was no doubt that many persons who had subsisted on indigestible food in the jungles, and would not come on the works, had fallen victims to bowel complaints.

The following figures indicate the progress in the demand for employment:—

Fortnight ending	Numbers employed on roads.	Gratuitously relieved from public funds.
June 20th	338	...
July 4th	1,410	...
„ 18th	2,092	16
August 1st	2,284	28
„ 15th	2,997	76
„ 29th	3,340	141
September 12th	4,216	159
„ 26th	2,963	206
October 10th	2,072	271

As the rains closed the number dropped.

Affairs in Seoni.

32. In Seoni distress was confined to the northern portion of the Lakhnadon Tahsil, a tract resembling Mandla in population and physical characteristics, and in April it was reported that the people of this tract were beginning to be pinched for food. A number of organized grain raids took place about this time, and though most of the persons engaged in them were well-fed, the mere fact of their perpetration indicated the existence of distress. The forests of this tract were thrown open for the collection of edible produce, and arrangements were made for the opening of road work. Some landlords were also induced to undertake tank work either from private funds or with the aid of Government advances.

Road work was opened in May, and on the 3rd June 743 persons were employed; but the numbers were most capricious, and during June they fluctuated within two or three days between 908 and 340. In July special arrangements were made through the patwaris, or village accountants, for giving small advances to enable the aboriginal cultivators to sow their millets. By this time the numbers on the road had declined, the daily average being about 400 only. About 100 paupers and orphans were supported by private charity in Seoni and Lakhnadon. By the end of August the numbers on work had again fallen, those receiving gratuitous relief being about the same as before. A similar number were employed on private tanks, and the Municipal Committee of Seoni found work for about 160 people. By the end of September numbers on the road had fluctuated between 399 and 65, and the average number on the road at the end of the first week in October was only 126.

So far as could be judged from the extraordinary fluctuations in the number of labourers on the road work, from their condition as testified to after inspection by the Commissioner of the Division, and from the appearance of the prisoners in the Jail as well as of those concerned in the grain raids, and having regard to the character of the previous harvests, the only conclusion which seemed warranted was that the distress in this district was much less severe than in any other part of the Division.

Character of the monsoon.

33. Meanwhile, there was nothing in the early progress of the monsoon to cause anxiety. The June rainfall was quite satisfactory, and July gave good rain with seasonable breaks; during the latter part of that month and August a succession of cyclonic storms swept up from the Bay of Bengal, and were deflected from the usual north-westerly to a more southerly course across the Province, giving plentiful rain to all districts. This deflection, which caused drought in Behar and the North-Western Provinces, gave promise of plenty in the Central Provinces. Indeed the break which occurred in the beginning of September was most welcome in Jubbulpore and some of the Northern Districts. In the first week of September the falls were insignificant in the Northern Districts and in the Plateau Districts except Mandla, but elsewhere moderate rain fell. The second week of September was rainless throughout the Province except in Sambalpur, and some anxiety began to be felt. At the beginning of the third week there were a few light local showers in the Nagpur country, and when towards the close of the week the advent of another cyclonic storm was announced, it was hoped that all anxieties would be at an end. This storm, however, turned eastwards, only the fringe of it touching the east of the Central Provinces. This rain, which fell on the last day of the second week and the first of the third week, gave the following amounts:—

Damoh	...	3 inches	(but the Hatta Tahsil received none).
Narsinghpur	...	1½ „	(but the Gadarwara Tahsil received none).
Mandla	...	1 to 2¾ „	
Raipur District	...	3 „	at the head-quarter station.
		4¾ „	at Drug.
		3 „	at Dhamtari.
		1 „	at Simga.
Sambalpur	...	2½ to 3 „	

Elsewhere in the Provinces there was either no rain or else a fall of a few cents only. As news gradually came in that even in the districts which had registered rainfall the fall had been very local and partial, the position began to be serious, and as October also went by without rain, it became clear that famine was imminent in those parts of the Province which had already suffered most in the past.

Course of prices.

34. Similarly, during the early months of the monsoon the course of prices gave no occasion for alarm, and no important rise took place until the end of August in Jubbulpore, Damoh and Mandla, and until September in Saugor and Seoni.

The prices in seers per rupee of the 15th August and subsequent fortnights of the staple foods, wheat and gram, were as detailed below :—

	Saugor.		Damoh.		Jubbulpore.	
	Wheat.	Gram.	Wheat.	Gram.	Wheat.	Gram.
August 15th	11¼	13½	10¼	11	12½	13
„ 31st	11¼	13½	9	11	12	13
September 15th	8 4/5	10¾	9	11 2/5	11	12¾
„ 30th	8 4/5	9	8½	10	9	11

During these two months in Mandla wheat gradually rose from 12½ and 10 to 8½, and gram from 13, 12½ and 10½ to 10 seers per rupee. In Seoni no such large rise was apparent, and it was only in September that wheat rose from 13 to 12 seers and then to 10¼, and gram from 13 to 12½ to 11. The rise in September was common to the whole Province, and was occasioned by the news of the expected failure of crops in Upper India.

The course of prices and the effect on trade of the failure of rain in September and October which converted into famine the promise of plenty will be discussed in a subsequent Chapter; but it may be noted that the imports of food-grains into the Jubbulpore block from outside the Province during the quarter ending the 30th September 1896 were 204,000 maunds only, as against 213,000 in the previous year, and the imports from other parts of the Province, mainly from Chhattisgarh, were only 142,000 as against 133,000 in the same quarter of the preceding year. The total imports of that quarter were thus exactly the same in both years, or 346,000 maunds. These imports represented only a four months' supply for about 180,000 people out of a population of over two millions. The fact shows that the actual amount of food available during the rains was not deficient, and that the sudden rise of prices was due to the disquieting rumours of impending failure which came from neighbouring Provinces.

35. It is now necessary to go back to the other Divisions of the Province. The districts in which some anxiety existed were Narsinghpur, Hoshangabad, Betul and Balaghat.

Condition of the people in other parts of the Province.

In the first two districts the crops of 1895-96 were better than in the year preceding. Reviewing the year in Narsinghpur, the Deputy Commissioner reported that the cultivating classes had a sufficiency, though not enough to make up for past losses; and the labouring classes continued to suffer from some distress. But the actual mortality was no higher than in the year preceding, and the only measures considered necessary were the establishment by private charity of poor-houses at the two chief towns and the throwing open of the Government forests to the people. No special relief works were opened, as the situation appeared to be less serious than in the previous year, when test works failed to attract any appreciable number of the labouring classes.

In Hoshangabad no distress existed in the Seoni and Harda Tahsils, where the crops had been fair, but in the two eastern tahsils the poorer people had become pinched for food. The opening of the forests in these tracts was of assistance to

them. A similar measure was taken in Betul as a precaution against distress appearing among the poorer aboriginals. Nimar and Chhindwara gave no cause for anxiety.

In the Nagpur Division, as has been already shown, the districts of Wardha, Nagpur and Chanda fared fairly well, better than in the preceding year, and there was no evidence of distress in them. In Bhandara and Balaghat it was otherwise. The poor in these districts endured privation, but in the hot weather when, at the instance of the Commissioner, a grant of Rs. 5,000 was allotted for the construction of tanks as a test work in the Baihar Tahsil of Balaghat, only 46 labourers could be got together.

In Chhattisgarh the losses of 1895-96 were most severe in Bilaspur, and in the Simga, or northern, Tahsil of Raipur. A good deal of private work was undertaken both on Court of Wards Estates and by private landlords, and famine conditions did not show themselves until the close of 1896.

Mortality in 1896.

36. The total mortality of 1896 can best be considered in this Chapter, although the last three months properly belong to the record of the famine year. The full effects of the failure of the autumn crops of 1896 were not manifested until the beginning of 1897, nor did the relief measures fully develope themselves until the close of the year. The reaping of the autumn crops, small though their outturn was, gave a temporary respite, which was utilized in perfecting the organization for relief, and the number of deaths largely decreased during the last three months of the year.

The following statement compares the mortality of 1895 with that of 1896 per thousand of the population:—

District.	1895.			1896.		
	Cholera and Small-pox.	Other causes.	Total.	Cholera and Small-pox.	Other causes.	Total.
Saugor	2·41	49·45	51·86	7·31	65·32	72·63
Damoh	2·26	43·10	45·36	9·76	78·52	88·28
Murwara	1·00	34·70	35·70	2·93	64·97	67·90
Jubbulpore	2·60	39·56	42·16	6·48	55·25	61·73
Mandla	0·27	30·22	30·49	16·26	57·42	73·68
Seoni	1·78	35·16	36·94	10·83	51·11	61·94
Narsinghpur	6·20	47·25	53·45	2·59	52·89	55·48
Hoshangabad	3·79	42·30	46·09	1·31	43·41	44·72
Nimar	7·45	49·61	57·06	2·47	52·36	54·83
Burhanpur	1·59	34·36	35·95	0·72	34·76	35·48
Betul	4·01	42·88	46·89	2·54	35·44	37·98
Chhindwara	0·94	40·48	41·42	4·30	40·51	44·81
Wardha	2·93	38·46	41·39	8·32	37·92	46·23
Nagpur	2·88	32·85	35·73	3·53	33·87	37·40
Chanda	5·86	29·64	35·50	6·25	30·36	36·61
Bhandara	3·50	30·46	33·96	2·41	34·23	36·64
Balaghat	0·31	30·01	30·32	2·57	47·42	49·99
Raipur	0·22	25·48	25·70	9·64	32·50	42·14
Bilaspur	0·70	25·75	26·45	11·82	35·72	47·54
Sambalpur	0·17	22·56	22·73	2·22	28·17	30·39
Total Central Provinces...	2·33	34·42	36·75	6·47	42·84	49·31

The total deaths in 1896 numbered 468,469, against 349,137 in 1895. No such death-rate had ever before been registered. Of these, 52,985 deaths were due to cholera, 280,760 to fevers, and 29,882 to bowel complaints. The following remarks, which appeared in the Chief Commissioner's review of the Sanitary Report for 1896, summarize the meteorological features of the year in relation to increased mortality :—

Discussion of death-rates in 1896.

> The meteorological features of the year (besides the pressure of agricultural distress) were favourable to the development of the chief diseases from which the population suffered. The exceedingly dry and hot spring and summer was the season of the greatest prevalence of cholera, which reached its maximum in April (8,407 deaths), May (12,935) and June (14,000). The scanty and foul water-supply which was the natural result of the drought may reasonably be supposed to have been also the main cause of the cholera, which, besides the districts of the Jubbulpore Division, was particularly prevalent in Bilaspur and Raipur, districts which rely for their water-supply upon tanks formed by impounding the surface drainage.
>
> The copious rainfall of July and August, and the unseasonable drought of September and October, favoured the development of fevers to an unusual degree, and it is certain that forms of disease classed under this denomination prevailed to an exceptional extent not only among those who suffered from privation, but among the well-to-do as well, during the last quarter of the year. Damoh, Saugor and the northern portion of Jubbulpore called Murwara suffered greatly from this scourge, which was also prevalent during the autumn and winter in the adjacent Native States and the Bundelkhand Districts of the North-Western Provinces; another severely afflicted district was Nimar, with a mortality from fevers of 46·26 *per mille*: this district was at the time practically free from distress.
>
> Bowel diseases are always found to be exceptionally prevalent in seasons of scarcity, when the poor resort to unwholesome and unsuitable food; they are also ordinarily an accompaniment of cholera epidemics, many cases due to the latter disease being erroneously reported under the milder forms of sickness. They were prevalent chiefly during the rainy months of July and August, falling considerably in number towards the end of the year.

Extent to which privation raised the mortality.

No accurate estimate can be formed of the extent to which the unfavourable conditions of the weather described above and the prevalence of distress respectively influenced the death-rates. Outside the Jubbulpore Division and Narsinghpur (death-rate 52·87) the highest rate from causes other than epidemics, 52·36 as against 49·61 in the preceding year, occurred in Nimar, a district in which it is certain that no distress existed, and it may be judged from this that where the mortality, excluding deaths from cholera and small-pox, has appreciably exceeded 50 *per mille*, the effects of privation have been at work. This test would show severe distress to have existed in Saugor, Damoh, Murwara, Jubbulpore and Mandla, an inference fully confirmed by their history as set forth in this narrative. In the case of these districts and in Seoni, where relief was necessary in a part of the district, a more detailed examination of the mortality is advisable.

Mortality in the Jubbulpore Division.

37. The total number of deaths which occurred during 1896 in these five districts amounted to 166,950 on a population of 2,375,652, or 70·27 *per mille*. Of these, cholera, which raged in the hot weather, accounted for no less than 20,243, and small-pox for 1,034, making a total from these causes of 9·33 *per mille*. The mortality therefore, exclusive of deaths caused by epidemics, was 60·94. It may therefore roughly be said that the probable extra fatality which privation gave to the diseases of the season amounted to about 8 persons *per mille*, or some 18,000 in all among a total population of $2\frac{1}{3}$ millions. The monthly fluctuations of the death-rate in these districts were as follows :—

Mortality (excluding deaths from Cholera and Small-pox) in the Jubbulpore Division.

Month.	Saugor.	Damoh.	Murwara.	Jubbulpore.	Mandla.	Seoni.
January ...	4·4	4·1	4·1	3·1	2·8	3·3
February ...	4·4	4·5	6·2	2·9	3·1	2·7
March ...	3·1	4·4	1·8	2·3	3·3	3·4
April ...	3·7	4·7	4·4	4·3	2·8	2·9
May ...	4·1	4·2	3·1	3·3	3·5	4·1
June ...	4·2	4·8	3·9	2·7	4·8	3·2
July ...	5·5	6·5	4·9	4·1	5·6	4·1
August ...	7·5	10·6	8·2	7·2	10·4	6·7
September ...	8·2	11·5	8·6	8·1	8·5	5·8
October ...	8·1	10·0	7·5	7·4	5·9	6·1
November ...	6·2	7·7	5·8	5·0	3·5	4·2
December ...	5·6	5·8	6·2	4·9	4·0	4·6

The mortality rate of February in Murwara, which was due to special causes already explained, was speedily reduced by the measures taken. In the remaining districts it will be seen that the death-rate was really high only during the unhealthy months of August, September and October, and speedily fell with the harvesting of such autumn crops as survived the drought, and with the setting in of cold-weather conditions.

Allowance must be made in the first four districts for the manner in which the death-rates were swelled by the influx of emaciated persons from the neighbouring Native States, who arrived too late for relief, but even so the mortality during August and September was grievously high. It would be premature to discuss at this stage the question whether this mortality could have been prevented, and the history of the famine proper will shed further light on the subject; but there are three points to which special attention must be drawn. The first is that until the month of July the measures taken were adequate to keep down the mortality, and that these measures continued and were extended during the rest of the year, until they merged into the regular relief operations under the Famine Code. The second is that until the end of August the autumn crops promised to give bumper outturns, and that neither prices nor the resort by the people to relief showed that distress was becoming acute. The last is that owing to casualties in the ranks of the Commission, the charge of the districts of Jubbulpore, Damoh and Seoni had to be entrusted at the most critical period to young and inexperienced officers, while the Deputy Commissioner of Saugor was incapacitated by illness.

Summary of expenditure on relief during years preceding the famine.

38. The progress of events when the period of actual famine began, its effects on the people, and the measures adopted to relieve distress, do not belong to this part of the Narrative, and this Chapter may fitly conclude with a tabular summary of the direct and indirect expenditure incurred by Government for the

relief of the people of the Jubbulpore Division during the years which preceded the famine of 1896-97 :—

Year.	Suspension of land revenue.	Remission of land revenue.	Expenditure on construction and repairs of district roads.	Direct expenditure for famine relief.	Loss of revenue in the Forest Department.	Total of columns 3—6, *plus* revenue suspended, but not yet remitted.	*Takávi* advances.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1894-95 ...	4,30,339	3,04,456	46,849	73,417	40,000	4,64,722	6,54,815
1895-96 (to commencement of famine).	2,04,887	6,19,303	1,42,861	59,132	93,952	9,15,248 *5,00,000	2,80,093
Total ...	6,35,226	9,23,769	1,89,710	1,32,549	1,33,952	18,79,970	9,34,908

* Suspended (but not remitted) land revenue.

CHAPTER II.

PRESSURE AND EFFECTS OF FAMINE.

Scope of this Chapter.

39. The preceding Chapter has dealt with the progress of events up to the close of September 1896; it has shown how essential it was for the recovery of the Province from the depression caused by successive bad seasons that the autumn harvest of 1896 should be a bountiful one; and how completely the failure of the rains, early in September, converted a promise of plenty into widespread alarm. It is from this period that narrative of the famine proper begins.

The present Chapter must, however, be confined to the effects of the failure of the crops on the circumstances of the people *during the continuance* of the famine. It is only by an examination of these effects that the spread and intensity of distress and the development of the relief measures necessary to combat it (which will form the subject of the next Chapter) can be closely followed.

Factors determining the effects of a crop failure.

40 The immediate effect which a crop failure, apart from its own intensity, has upon the circumstances of the people depends mainly on the condition of food-stocks, the circumstances of surrounding tracts, the possibility of aid from outside, the degree of alarm engendered, and the extent to which the prospects of the next harvest tend to restore confidence. In the failure of 1896 everything under these heads was unfavourable: bad harvests had reduced food-stocks; other Provinces asked for help rather than gave it; the prospects of the coming spring crops were more than gloomy. But all these considerations, and the alarm to which they gave rise, are expressed so to speak in one common denominator—the course of prices; and it is this subject which must claim the first place in this Chapter.

(*a*). *The course of Prices.*

Effect of the outlook on prices during the last quarter of 1896.

41. The threatenings of famine, as has already been stated, made themselves manifest in Upper India earlier than in the Central Provinces. The monsoon rains, which had been unusually abundant and well-sustained in these Provinces, had in the Punjab and North-Western Provinces been feeble and irregular; and while a bountiful harvest seemed probable here, the condition of the crops early began to cause anxiety in the north and north-west of India. At the end of August 1896 prices were in a very sensitive condition. Stocks were, owing to previous bad harvests, lower than is usual at this season of the year, especially in the districts of the Jubbulpore Division, where distress already existed. Though the crops on the ground promised speedy replenishment, the critical time of September and October had still to be passed, and the news of apprehensions in the neighbouring Provinces, added to the demand for food-grains which they speedily began to make, excited alarm before there was any cause for fearing that the area of failure would spread to the Central Provinces. When, therefore, the break in September showed itself to be a final withdrawal of the rains, the feeling of disquietude developed into panic, and prices went up with a bound. With a rainless October, a hot sun and dry west winds, the condition of the autumn crops daily deteriorated, while the ground rapidly hardened to such an extent that sowing of the spring crops became impossible except in low-lying portions or in soils specially retentive of moisture. The outlook in November was very serious: in such lands as had been sown germination, it is true, was better than expected, and the young spring crops were still surviving, but there was scant hope of any but a most wretched outturn until, in the last week of November, came some welcome rain. The fall was fairly general in the south of the Province, in Chhindwara, Seoni, Mandla and Damoh, but was very scanty and ill-distributed in Saugor and the western districts, Hoshangabad, Betul and Nimar. This fall, though invaluable to the spring corps on the ground, and as an encouragement to the disheartened cultivators, came too late to render much additional sowing possible, while the spring harvest was as yet too far distant for any immediate effect to be exerted on the state of prices. The great benefits of the November rain were to be manifested later on in improved prospects in Upper India and the help which the Province was subsequently to receive, as well as in the increased outturns which the spring crops ultimately yielded.

It may be said, therefore, that the ten weeks which elapsed between the 1st October and the 15th December, before the autumn harvest, scanty though it was, came to hand, and before the extent to which the November rain was likely to alter the situation could be judged, mark the first period of the famine. It was a period when wild rumours were afloat, and men's minds were governed rather by the disasters they apprehended than by the ills they had actually experienced. The effect on the price of food during these weeks of alarm and uncertainty is best illustrated by the table given below:—

	PRICES IN SEERS PER RUPEE.							
	Jubbulpore Division.		Nerbudda Division.		Nagpur-Wardha.		Rice Districts.	
							Waingan-ga.	Chhattis-garh.
	Wheat	Gram.	Wheat.	Juar.	Wheat.	Juar.	Rice.	Rice.
Average prices of five years, 1889—1894.	16	20	14·75	16·75	15	20	14	17·67
Average prices of 1895-96 (agricultural year).	12·75	16	13·50	17·50	14·50	19	12·75	16
Average prices in last quarter of 1896 (October 1st to December 15th).	8·67	10	8·80	11·50	9	11·67	9·50	10·25

The first line represents normal prices with normal exports; the second the effects of the previous bad years with a decline of exports; the last the upward bound when the alarm of famine in India followed by the local failure was sounded.

Consequent panic and rioting.

42. The effect on the people of this sudden rise in the latter part of September may well be imagined. In Nagpur, a district in which there was no reason to fear a local failure of any magnitude, grain riots broke out. The large class of weavers of that city and the towns in the interior of the district, already discontented with the depression in their trade which a "*Singhasth*" year, when Hindus are in this part of the country interdicted from marriages, entails upon them, and joined and incited by the turbulent characters to be found in every town, and supported by the sympathy of the labouring poor and all who depended upon a small cash wage, began plundering the markets and grain shops. The grainsellers closed their shops and counter-ordered imports of grain, and two or three days elapsed before the riots could with the aid of the Volunteers and Military be fully quelled. The news of the Nagpur riots and of similar outbreaks in other parts of India encouraged imitators elsewhere in the Province; but the prompt justice meted out to the rioters in Nagpur had its effect, and all such attempts were easily suppressed. The shops were re-opened and imports resumed, but the misguided action of the rioters so far left the grain-dealers masters of the situation that they no longer had the fear before them of threatened plunder.

Supposed combination among dealers.

43. It was at this time that the grain-dealing classes were the object of the greatest clamour. The ignorant masses condemned them as extortioners, and they incurred the odium of the more enlightened, including even some officers of Government. There was doubtless some unnecessary panic which raised prices higher thas was justified in the beginning, and individual dealers may have cheated the poor by adulterating grain or giving short measure; but now that district officers are able to look back dispassionately on the history of the famine, they unanimously reject the idea that there was any combination among grain dealers to raise prices above their true economic level, having regard to the condition of trade and stocks. Their experience has been that it is not from the combination of grain dealers as a class that inflation of prices is to be feared, but from the action of individual dealers in out-of-the-way localities, where isolation ensures them a virtual monopoly. Here and there, where the local shopkeepers were taking unfair advantage of the necessities of the people, the Deputy Commissioner was able to bring

his influence to bear. In Chanda many village dealers were induced to sell at a slightly lower rate to persons really distressed, and the opening of cheap grain shops, which were started in certain places in connection with the relief arrangements of the Indian Charitable Fund, operated to reduce prices slightly where they were previously unduly inflated by the action of monopolists. The movements of food grains, as shown by the traffic returns, during this period should however dissipate any ideas that may have lingered of the existence of any general combination. The increased demand for food grain from other parts of India was the first cause of the rise. In the quarter ending the 30th September 1896, a period when exports are usually at their lowest, the export of food grain to other Provinces amounted to 331,000 maunds as compared with 257,000 in the corresponding quarter of the previous year, and this increase was concentrated in the closing weeks of the quarter. During the last three months of 1896 the increase was still more remarkable. Other Provinces of India, to leave the seaports out of consideration, in that period took 1,072,000 maunds, as compared with 429,000 in the last quarter of 1895. These are, however, total figures in which local diversities disappear. Between the various divisions of the Province, and neighbouring Provinces adjacent to them, grain was moving hither and thither in the most bewildering fashion. The Jubbulpore Division, which had been importing food for two years past, with the local crops withering and famine already across its threshold, spared 150,000 maunds to Upper and Central India, receiving back only 43,000; the Nerbudda valley districts sent out their wheat into the North-Western Provinces and Central India, and even exported to Bombay, their total export of food grains being 318,000 maunds; Nimar sent 50,000 maunds of produce away (18,000 to Rajputana and Central India) and received 23,000 maunds (15,000 from Rajputana and Central India); Nagpur parted with 247,000 maunds, of which seven-eighths went in equal portions to Bombay, Berar and Calcutta, and received back only 14,000 from Berar; Chhattisgarh poured out its stocks, half a million maunds to other Provinces, and over 300,000 more to other districts of the Central Provinces. With such movements of grain backwards and forwards, it would be idle to allege the possibility of combination. With prices at 9 or 10 seers per rupee, over a million maunds could be profitably bought up by dealers in neighbouring Provinces. The demand could only be kept in check by rising prices in the exporting Province; had they been maintained at about 12 seers, the Province must have been dangerously depleted, for, as will presently be seen, later on in the year heavy imports were required to meet the wants of the labouring and industrial classes.

Refuted by condition of export.

44. The next two periods which call for attention are those relating respectively to the second half of December 1896 and January 1897, and to the months of February and March 1897. In the first of these periods the gathering in of the autumn harvest, such as it was, and the improvement manifested in the condition of the spring crops, were causes tending to ease prices. The second period included the reaping of the spring crops. If these were destined to relieve the situation, they would do so in this period, or not at all.

Effect of harvests on prices very small.

The prices of these two periods are contrasted with those which prevailed during the antecedent period of uncertainty:—

PRICES IN SEERS PER RUPEE.

Period.	Jubbulpore Division.		Nerbudda Division.		Nagpur Wardha.		Waingan-ga.	Chhattis-garh.
	Wheat.	Gram.	Wheat.	Juar.	Wheat.	Juar.	Rice.	Rice.
October to mid December ...	8·67	10	8·80	11·50	9	11·67	9·50	10·25
Late December and January...	8·80	10·25	8·80	10·80	9·67	12·67	9	10·50
February and March ...	9·50	11·20	9·20	11	9·20	11·50	8·50	10·67

Export during the first quarter of 1897.

The completion of the autumn harvest eased prices to a small extent in the Nagpur country, and the reaping of the spring crops did the same in the Northern Districts, but the alleviation was so slight and temporary that the situation was hardly changed. During this period, namely the quarter ending the 31st March 1897, the Province as a whole exported 985,000 maunds of food grain and imported 214,000 only. Half of the exports were from Chhattisgarh, which itself took nothing in the shape of imports.

The wheat exported, 187,000 maunds, consisted almost entirely of old stocks, and two-thirds of this amount was consigned to Upper and Central India. Of the rice exported (447,000 maunds), four-fifths were sent in a similar direction and to Berar. Bombay, Berar and the North-Western Provinces took up nearly the whole of the exports of juar (126,000 maunds); gram and pulse, 120,000 maunds, were carried away mostly by the North-Western Provinces, Central India and Berar. On the other hand, the principal imports from abroad were 70,000 maunds of all kinds of food-grains taken by Nimar, and 100,000 maunds of Rangoon rice from Calcutta, of which two-thirds were received by Jubbulpore.

It is thus hardly to be wondered that during this quarter there was no appreciable fall of prices. Indeed prices were as yet not high enough to discourage exports to other parts of India; while the cultivating classes clung desperately to their produce wherever harvests had been scarce. The country people would not bring the usual amount of grain into the towns; confidence in the stability of the seasons in the Central Provinces had been completely shaken, cultivators concealed most of their grain for fear of its being seized by creditors, and everybody who had dependents and servants to feed retained his stocks until the character of the next harvest was assured. This left all the labouring classes who were not actually supported by their employers, all cultivators whose crops had entirely failed, or who, having no spring crops, had exhausted the scanty food-supply which their autumn crops had yielded, and all the non-agricultural population, dependent on the supplies of grain which actually reached the markets, and it was not long before the balance of trade turned. Prices rose and imports came pouring in, while exports dwindled down.

Prices during the periods between the spring crops and the end of the year.

45. After the spring harvest followed a period of weary inaction—the hot weather to pass through and no possibility of a local addition to the food supplies. Then came sowing time with its anxieties, and then the gradual development of the *kharif* crops. As the year wore on, October brought the practical assurance of a successful harvest, and the remaining two months the reality. The prices of these periods were as shown below:—

Period.	Jubbulpore.		Nerbudda.		Nagpur and Wardha		Wainganga.	Chhattisgarh.
	Wheat.	Gram.	Wheat.	Juar.	Wheat.	Juar.	Rice.	Rice.
February and March ...	9·50	11·20	9·20	11	9·20	11·50	8·50	10·67
Hot weather, April 15th to June 15th.	8·50	9	8	8·75	8·50	9·87	7·50	8·50
Drought of early rains, June 15th to July 15th.	8 13	7·87	7·20	8	7·67	8·50	7·33	8
Rains, July 15th to end of September.	8·40	8·20	7·60	8·25	7·75	8·87	7·50	8·33
October ...	9·33	8·33	8	...	8·50	10	8·67	10·67
November and December.	9·67	10·40	9	17·40	9·25	15·50	12·33	13

During the hot weather prices rose markedly. The effect of the spring harvest, which had hardly been appreciable at the time, had quite disappeared. With the opening of the rains some relief was expected, but the sudden interruption of the monsoon current for nearly three weeks during the last part of June and beginning of July occasioned further grave alarm, and pressure at once tightened. When rain again fell and continued with seasonable breaks for the rest of the monsoon months, there was some slight relaxation, which continued in October; but it was not until the people felt the autumn crops within their grasp that they would open out their stores and bring the hoarded grain to market. Since the close of the year confidence has been completely restored, and the price-current return for the 31st January shows the following rates in seers per rupee:—

	Wheat.	Juar.	Rice.	Gram.
Jubbulpore	10	20	14	12
Nerbudda	9·50	20	...	10
Nagpur and Wardha	10	20	15	9
Wainganga	9	...	14	10
Chhattisgarh	10·50	...	15	9

Wheat and gram must remain high until the spring crops are reaped, but the prices of autumn grains are now normal and in particular localities unusually low.

Imports during the critical period of the year.

During the critical period of the hot weather and rains, when prices reached the highest point, exports much decreased and imports began. For the quarters ending the 30th June and the 30th September respectively the following figures show the imports and exports of food-grains for the Province as a whole:—

Quarter ending	Exports.	Imports.	Net imports.
	Maunds.	Maunds.	Maunds.
June 30th	323 000	1,391,000	1 068 000
September 30th	163.000	910,000	747 000
Total ...	486,000	2,301,000	1,815,000

Exact returns are not available for the last quarter of 1897, but from the rough figures supplied week by week by Station Masters it would appear unlikely that the net imports of the Province as a whole will be found to have exceeded 100,000 maunds during this quarter, although movements of grain within the Province have been fairly active.

District price variations.

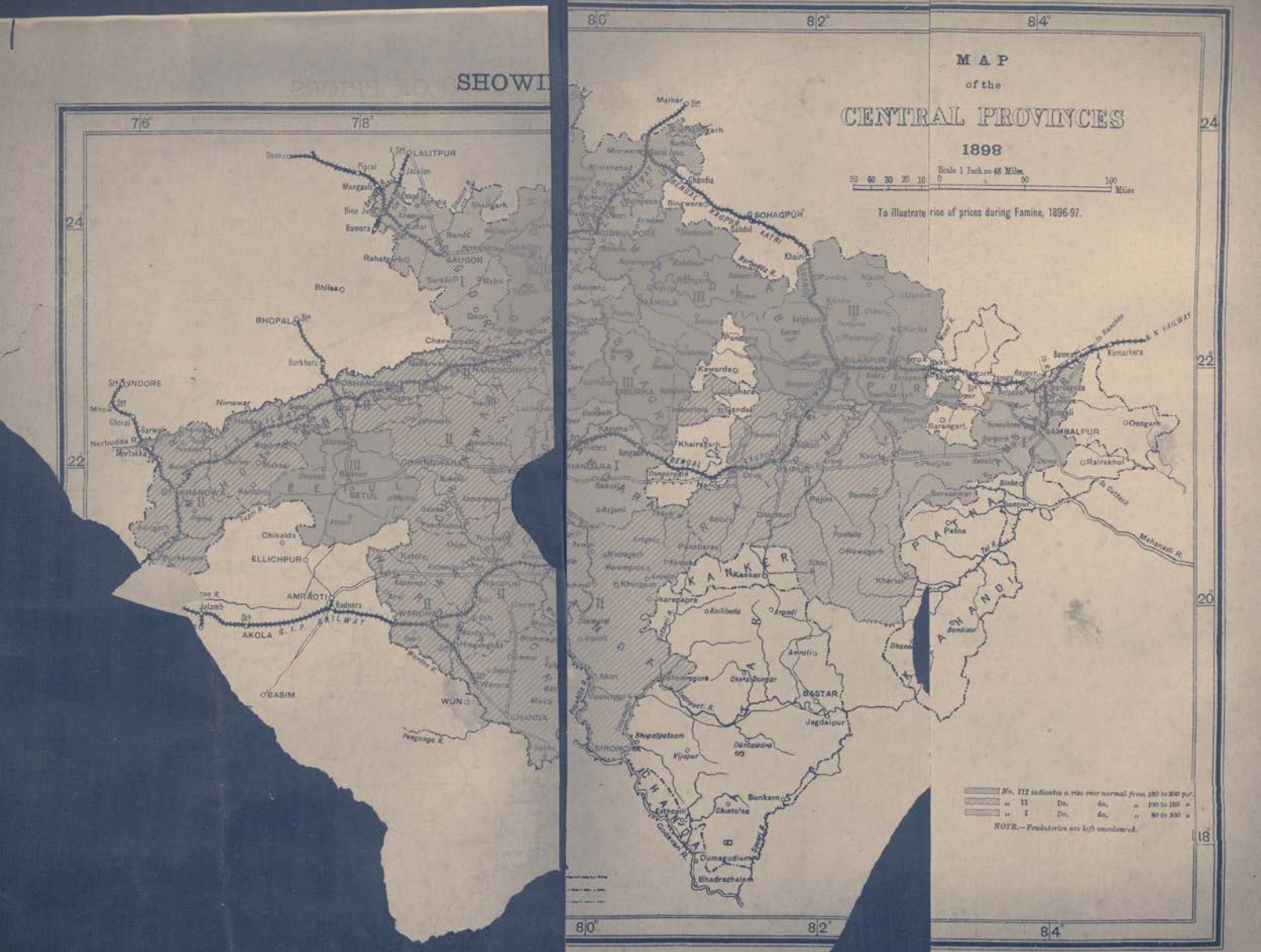
46. In the foregoing paragraph the course of prices for the typical staples of typical tracts during the period October 1896 to December 1897 has been traced through the various stages at which the situation was altered by harvests, prospects, or movements of grain. A statement giving fortnightly quotations for each district of the Province is attached to this Report, reference to which will exhibit the facts in greater detail.

An idea of the district variations may be gained from the table below, which shows the highest price touched by the cheapest grain during the famine contrasted with the average price in normal times of the principal staple of each district, the period when that price was reached, and the percentage by which it exceeded the average just referred to:—

District.	Average price of cheapest staple in normal times.	Highest price at head-quarters of cheapest grain at any time during famine.	Date when highest price prevailed.	Percentage by which highest price of cheapest grain exceeded the average.
	Seers.	Seers.		
Jubbulpore ...	17	9	June and August ...	88
Nagpur ...	18	8·62	June and July ...	120
Seoni ...	17	8·50	Do. do. ...	100
Sambalpur ...	16	8·25	August	94
Saugor ...	15	8·23	June	82
Wardha ...	18	8·00	August	125
Mandla ...	22	7·75	June	194
Chhindwara ...	18	7·60	July, August, and Septr...	136
Chanda ...	16	7·60	June and July	110
Nimar ...	18	7·53	August	139
Narsinghpur ...	16	7·53	July	112
Bhandara ...	15	7·50	July and August ...	100
Raipur ...	18	7·50	August	140
Hoshangabad ...	17	7·46	Do.	127
Bilaspur ...	19	7·11	Do.	167
Damoh ...	18	6·66	July	170
Betul ...	18	6·40	June	182
Balaghat ...	16	6·25	August	188

NG RISE OF PRICES.

SHOWI


MAP
of the
CENTRAL PROVINCES
1898
Scale 1 Inch = 48 Miles.
50 40 30 20 10 0 50 100 Miles
To illustrate rise of prices during Famine, 1896-97.
No. III indicates a rise over normal from 150 to 200 p.c.
" II Do. do. " 100 to 150 "
" I Do. do. " 50 to 100 "
NOTE.—Feudatories are left uncoloured.
BHOPAL
LALITPUR
SAUGOR
Bhilsa
SEHORE
Nimawar
HOSHANGABAD
BETUL
Chikalda
ELLICHPUR
AMRAOTI
AKOLA
BASIM
WUN
CHANDA
BILASPUR
SOHAGPUR
Kawardha
Khairagarh
Sarangarh
SAMBALPUR
Deogarh
Rairakhol
Patna
Bonai
Kanker
DURG
BASTAR
Jagdalpur
Bijapur
Bhadrachalam
Dumagudium
Bunkam
Chanda
Mahanadi R.
Wainganga R.
Godavari R.
Indravati R.
Sabari R.
Jalamb
Radnera
Nerbudda R.
Morkhera
Sarwai
Choral
Mhow
Sanawad
Barwaha
Burhanpur
Asirgarh
Piparia
Pachmarhi
Sohagpur
Pendra
Lormi
Kotma
Amarkantak
Mandla
Dindori
Waraseoni
Lanji
Baihar
Katangi
Seoni
Chhindwara
Umrer
Bramhapuri
Warora
Chanda
Wardha
Hinganghat
Wun
Pusad
Mangali
Sirsi
Bina Junction
Bamora
Rahatgarh
Bhilsa
Sarkheri
Chanderi
Basoda
Ganj Basoda
Udaipura
Silwani
Sehore
Ashta
Bhojpur
Nimawar
Harda
Timarni
Itarsi
Sohagpur
Pipariya
Gadarwara
Kareli
Narsinghpur
Gotegaon
Kundam
Jubbulpore
Katni
Murwara
Singrauli
Mahar
Maihar
Rewah
Amarpatan
Chandia
Singwara
Khairi
Pandaria
Kawardha
Lohara
Kendai
Khairagarh
Dongargarh
Nandgaon
Chhuikhadan
Kanker
Charamanda
Bhanupratappur
Kondagaon
Narayanpur
Jagdalpur
Dantewara
Konta
Sukma
Bijapur
Shopalpatnam
Bunkam
Chintalnar
Gotagoda
Dumagudium
Bhadrachalam
Godavari R.
Indravati R.
Sabari R.
Wainganga R.
Mahanadi R.
Sarangarh
Deogarh
Rairakhol
Patna
Bonai
Binka
Sonpur
Bargarh
Bijepur
Sambalpur
Jharsuguda
Kalibeda
Amgaon
Amanfio
Chanda Dongar
Dhamtari
Kharod
Kharsia
Pharsabahar
Raipur
Arjuni
Dhamtari
Nawagarh
Bemetara
Saja
Kawardha
Pandaria
Lormi
Pendra
Gaurela
Marwahi
Kotma
Amarkantak
Pali
Rampur
Korba
Katghora
Pathalgaon
Jashpurnagar
Kunkuri
Sarguja
Udaipur
Raigarh
Gharghoda
Jashpur
Sarangarh
Kharsia
Dharamjaigarh
Korba
Pendra
Gaurela
Marwahi
Kotma
Amarkantak
Pali
Rampur

Of the districts on the railway, which could be drained by export and fed by import, the average excess over the normal was 117 per cent., and of those remote from the railway the average excess was 161 per cent; that is to say, if 100 be taken as representing the normal price in each case, the height to which prices rose in the two kinds of districts was as follows:—

Railway districts	...	217
Non-railway districts	...	261

Prices in the interior.

47. All that has been said above relates to the prices at head-quarter markets. In the remoter localities prices were considerably higher, 4½ or 5 seers even being reached. This was the case in the Chhindwara Jagirs and in a remote corner of Hoshangabad far away from the railway. In parts of Mandla and the uplands of Balaghat grain almost ceased to be procurable when the rains began. Government intervention was required to stimulate private enterprise. In Mandla it was necessary to give local dealers contracts for the supply of grain at 23 different bazars. A kitchen in the Dindori Tahsil of that district was closed for three days in May for want of grain. In Betul great difficulty was experienced in obtaining transport for grain sent into the district, as the time when imports were most required was also that when bullocks were wanted for agricultural operations. Again, during the rains particular kinds of grain sometimes disappeared from the markets altogether. This was the case with juari in the Nerbudda Valley Districts; and during the same period the hill millets, kodon and kutki, which are never very widely brought to market, no longer appeared in the price quotations of the hill districts where they are produced, or if they did appear, the rates were so exorbitant that it was cheaper to buy wheat or rice.

The story of the intervention of Government to procure the import of grain in Mandla and Balaghat belongs to another Chapter, but the mere fact that it was necessary alone suffices to show how prices must have risen in inaccessible portions of the hilly districts.

(*b*). *Food-stocks and movements of Grain.*

48. In the course of the above survey of the state of prices during the famine it has been necessary to allude to the movements of trade and the condition of food-stocks. These important matters will now be treated in more detail.

Difficulties of estimating food-stocks.

There is no subject on which it is more difficult to obtain precise information than the amount of food-stocks existing in the country at any given time. Most of the zamindari areas of the Province have now been surveyed, but have not as yet begun to furnish complete statistical returns, while no returns whatever are available from the Feudatory States. We have not therefore as yet complete area figures to show the extent of land which produced crops. Our estimates of standard outturns, though based on the best information procurable from crop experiments, are still liable to much uncertainty, and the estimates of the actual outturns deduced from these standards depend further for their correctness on the accuracy with which reporting officers have expressed the harvests of the year in terms of annas in the rupee. Our rail-borne trade returns are the only precise figures which can be depended on, but these cannot show us in any case where the grain went to when it left the railway or whence it came before it was loaded on the truck.

However, by taking into consideration the surveyed tracts only, which have a population of close on ten millions, we may arrive at fair general approximations regarding food supplies.

The best estimates available place the annual yield of food grain at from three to three-and-a-half million tons. It would be quite safe, while accepting three and a half millions as a full outturn, to adopt three millions as an average.

The minimum annual food requirements of the population would be about one and three-quarter million tons, but, allowing for waste and for a more liberal diet, two million tons would be an outside estimate. Seed and cattle account for another half million tons, making a total consumption of two and a half million tons.

This, therefore, leaves about half a million tons as the balance annually available for export. We may now compare this with the trade returns.

49. As was fully shown in the last Chapter, the crops of the past few years, and especially those of 1895-96, were bad, and this is reflected in the trade returns :—

Year.	Exports of food-grain in tons.	Imports of food-grain in tons.	Net exports in tons.
Average of 7 years ending with 1893-94 ...	362,638	16,690	345,948
1894-95	197,163	52,623	144 540
1895-96	138,022	47 863	90,159

State of food-stocks at the beginning of the famine.

The crops of the year 1893-94, from which the exports of the financial year 1894-95 were drawn, were about 65 per cent. of the full, or about two and a quarter million tons, and those of 1894-95, governing the exports of 1895-96, were a little less, about two million tons. In neither of those years therefore did the actual crops of the year leave any exportable balance, although previous stocks, which could not have been less than half a million tons, allowed the continuance of export on a reduced scale. The crops of the year 1895-96 must have been rather below two million tons: it is obvious therefore that in the middle of 1896 the stocks available for export were not large.

During the seven average years ending with 1892-93 (the exports of 1893-94) the annual accumulation was about 150,000 tons. But grain being a perishable commodity, the stocks at any one time during that period and at its close probably did not exceed 600,000 tons.

The account may be imagined as something like the following :—

		Tons.
Stocks on the 1st April 1894 ...	...	600,000
Received from the year's harvests	...	2,225,000
Total	...	2,825,000
Consumed	...	2,225,000
Net exports	...	145,000
Total	...	2,370,000
Stocks on the 31st March 1895 ...	...	455,000
Received from the year's harvests	...	2,000,000
Total	...	2,455,000
Consumption of the year ...	...	2,100,000
Net exports ...	...	90,000
Total	...	2,190,000
Stocks on the 31st March 1896 ...	...	265,000

The major part of these stocks must have been concentrated in Chhattisgarh.

The crops of 1895-96 may have yielded about 1,800,000 tons.

On the 1st April 1896 the balance was thus 2,065,000 tons, less the consumption of the first three months of 1896, or half a million tons, making a balance of 1,565,000 tons to feed the people for 9 months, until the new crop came in.

In the June quarter we may estimate:—

	Tons.
Consumption	500,000
Net exports	36,655
Total ...	536,655
Balance at the end of June ...	1,028,345

During the September quarter consumption was again half a million tons and net exports only 254. The balance at the end of September was thus very low, or about 528,000 tons. This amount, with the autumn harvest of 1896 and the spring harvest of 1897, had to last the people until the end of 1897. It is thus not surprising that prices rose when other parts of India began to make heavy demands for food and the local crops were clearly about to fail. The available food stocks would barely suffice for three months, but still the exports went on, and the net out-goings of those three months ending the 31st December were no less than 42,516 tons. The absolute minimum requirements for human food alone during this quarter were 420,000 tons. The stocks had therefore fallen very low indeed when the autumn harvest came in, and cannot probably have exceeded 60,000 tons. Of these, 27,536 tons (the net export of the quarter ending the 31st March 1897) were sent away. The autumn crops of 1896 and the spring crops of 1897, with the help of the imports of the year and stocks of some 30,000 tons, had to feed the people during the whole of 1897. No other assistance could be expected until the autumn crops of 1897 came to market. We may now at this point proceed to enquire into the amount and distribution of the crops of 1896-97.

Areas cropped in 1896-97.

50. The areas put under autumn crops in 1896 were up to the average, as the people were anxious to obtain an early food supply, but the spring crop areas were grievously deficient. Seed was scarce, and much of the land became too hard to sow. The following figures show how the areas sown had been declining, the deficiency culminating in 1896-97:—

Year.	Area in Acres.		Total.
	Autumn crops.	Spring crops.	
1893-94	10,067,581	8,023,105	18,090 686
1894-95	10,422,811	7,357,287	17,780 098
1895-96	11,215,624	5,598,468	16,814 092
1896-97	10,526 941	3,986,638	14.513,579

The decrease in the after-cropping was still more marked, thus:—

	1893-94.	1894-95.	1895-96.	1896-97.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Cropped	18 090 686	17,780,098	16 814,092	14,513 579
Double-cropped	1 803 784	1,715,997	1 206 792	581,218
Net actual area cropped ...	16,286 902	16,064,101	15,607,300	13 932,361

CROP OUTTURN.

The decrease in the area producing spring crops was more marked in the case of some Divisions than in others :—

Division.	Normal.	Area under spring crops in 1897.
	Acres.	Acres.
Jubbulpore	2 833.000	1,184 000
Nerbudda	1,845,000	1 208,000
Nagpur	2,024 000	1 008,000
Chhattisgarh	1.772.000	587,000

In the last two Divisions the decrease occurred chiefly in the after-crops which follow rice.

Outturns of crops in 1896-97.

51. The rain which fell at the close of November was too late to enable much additional land to be sown, and the great diminution in the areas placed under spring crops largely discounted the benefit which that rain and subsequent showers in December and January conferred on the rabi-growing districts. Although yields were good in a few districts, they failed to counterbalance over the country as a whole the terrible losses sustained by the autumn crops from the drought of September and October.

The effect of the drought was the practical destruction of the small millets and most of the rice. So much of the broadcasted rice in the northern districts as had been sown in rich land, and irrigated rice in Chanda and Bhandara, escaped partially, while the rice crop of Sambalpur, which enjoyed sufficient September rain, was a very fair one. The large millet, juar, where grown on good black soil gave moderate yields, and in the Nagpur country cotton was fair and sesamum an excellent crop. Nimar and south Chhindwara, where cotton and juar are extensively grown, did fairly well. With these exceptions, the autumn crops were everywhere very bad.

The spring crops were good (in the reduced area sown) in Jubbulpore, Bilaspur, Mandla, Seoni and Chhindwara, which places received most rain in November. They were fair in Raipur and Nagpur, and poor everywhere else.

Summary of outturns.

52. The general result of the crops of 1896-97 may be summed up conveniently in the form adopted in the first Chapter to show the crops of the years preceding it. The diminution in the cropped area makes the total outturns very small beside the normal :—

District.	FULL CROP ON NORMAL AREA—100. ALL-ROUND OUTTURNS.	
	1895-96.	1896 97.
Saugor	42	35
Damoh	34	27
Jubbulpore	39	41
Mandla	44	27
Seoni	54	32
Narsinghpur	61	33
Hoshangabad	54	31
Nimar	73	50
Betul	47	35
Chhindwara	66	49
Wardha	74	45
Nagpur	71	56
Chanda	64	52
Bhandara	44	34
Balaghat	52	17
Raipur	44	33
Bilaspur	39	27
Sambalpur	70	70

Mandla, Damoh, Bilaspur and Balaghat stand out most prominently as the districts in which the failure was most intense; Nimar, Chhindwara, Nagpur, Chanda and Wardha had considerably better crops; while Sambalpur continued to prosper exceedingly.

53. Taking food crops alone, it is calculated that the yield in cleaned produce was only 1,391,513 tons, made up as follows:—

Autumn crops	...	...	...	862,780
Spring crops	...	...	...	528,733
		Total	...	1,391,513

The full yield on a full area of food grain is $3\frac{1}{2}$ million tons, so that the year's food supply was only 39 per cent. of a full yield, and only 46 per cent. of an average yield.

Food supply yielded by the harvests of 1896-97, and assistance received from imports.

To turn back again to the figures relating to food stocks given in paragraph 49, it will be seen that the total available stock during the first quarter of 1897 was only about 1,421,513 tons. This amount was barely equal to ten months' food supply at minimum rates. It was at this juncture that the exports began to diminish and imports to commence. Happily the fortunes of the crops in Upper India were better, and prices eased there to a sufficient extent to admit of the demand for Central Provinces grain abating without any very large further rise of prices here.

During the months April to June, the Punjab and North-Western Provinces sent down large quantities of wheat, the net imports being 7,250 tons, while no less than 32,640 tons of Burmah rice were sent up from the seaports. The total net imports of food for the quarter were 38,145 tons.

During the next three months, July to September inclusive, the net imports of wheat from Northern and Central India were still larger, 10,470 tons, while an additional amount, 13,920 tons, of Burmah rice was received. About 2,000 tons of grain of various kinds, principally American, came up from Calcutta. The total net imports of food grains for the quarter amounted to 26,680 tons.

Thus from March to September the total net imports aggregated 64,825 tons, equal to the food supply for that period of three quarters of a million people. The chief feature of the imports is really their smallness. But it has been shown that there was a bare sufficiency of food at the beginning of the year, and the principal necessity for imports was to make up for the food supplies locked up in the hands of the agricultural classes, who would not part with them lest worse might befall them. The Burmah rice was used in the towns and on the relief-works. But though small when judged by the side of the food requirements of the whole population, they were invaluable for the purpose which they served, for they prevented a further rise in the price of food and the panic which would have followed a failure of food supplies among the town population. Country rice was sold generally at about a seer to the rupee dearer than the Rangoon variety, and but for the latter being available, the price of the former must have risen to a much higher pitch.

Distribution of food in various parts of the Province.

54. The condition of food stocks and the assistance which imports gave are still more clearly exhibited by reference to district and divisional figures. In the divisional statements which follow will be shown the extent of the food-supply yielded in each district by the crops of 1896-97, and the food requirements of the people. The position may be reckoned from the 1st January 1897, when the autumn crops had come in, as from the state of exports during the last quarter of 1896, it may be assumed that stocks were sufficient to feed the people up till then. The food requirements will be reckoned at a ten months' food supply, *i. e.*, until the end of October, by which time the autumn crops of 1897 had begun to come in.

Jubbulpore Division.

District.	*Kharif*, 1896.	*Rabi*, 1897.	Total.	Food requirements for 10 months.	Surplus.	Deficit.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Saugor	26 794	37,720	64 514	82,180	...	—17,666
Damoh	14 978	12,420	27,398	45 220	...	—17,822
Jubbulpore	26,482	91,810	118,292	103 940	14,352	...
Mandla	11,195	17,010	28,205	47,140	...	—18,935
Seoni	19 821	36,150	55,971	51,500	4,471	...
Total ...	99 270	195,110	294,380	329,980	18 823	54,423
					Net deficit	35,600

The net imports of the Jubbulpore Division were:—

	Tons.
Quarter ending 31st March ...	5,644
„ „ 30th June ...	14,340
„ „ 30th September ...	11,390
„ „ October ...	2,000
Total ...	33,374

These were the rail-borne imports of Saugor and Jubbulpore, from which Mandla and Damoh were supplied, and they correspond with some closeness to the estimated deficit of the food-supply. The record of road imports into Mandla and Damoh cannot be regarded as accurate, but so far as it went it showed imports into Damoh of 7,200 tons, and into Mandla of 6,532 tons.

Nerbudda Division.

District.	*Kharif*, 1896.	*Rabi*, 1897.	Total.	Food requirements for 10 months.	Surplus.	Deficit.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons	Tons.	Tons.
Narsinghpur	11,325	27,540	38,865	50 980	...	12 115
Hoshangabad	9,082	50 810	59 892	62 950	...	3,058
Nimar	33 265	6,020	39,285	34 780	4 505	...
Betul	25,175	29 250	54,425	44,880	9 545	...
Chhindwara	29,662	37 610	67,272	47,150	20,122	...
Total ...	108,509	151,230	259 739	240,740	34,172	15 173
				Net surplus	18 999	...

Chhindwara was the only district in which the food-supply was really sufficient, and, so far as returns show, it kept its supply to itself and did not export much food. Similarly, Betul kept all it had and took about 660 tons besides. This being so, the rest of the Division had a deficit of over 10,000 tons.

The net imports were :—

		Tons.
March quarter	...	405
June ,,	...	11,685
September ,,	...	9,604
October	...	832
Total	...	22,526

Before the end of 1896 the Nerbudda Districts exported very largely, and these imports were necessary to counterbalance that export, and to feed the urban and labouring population in default of the supplies which the agricultural classes locked up for their own consumption. The imports represent food for 10 months for 160,000 people only.

Nagpur Division.

District.	*Kharif*, 1896.	*Rabi*, 1897.	Total.	Ten months' food requirements.	Surplus.	Deficit.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Wardha ...	41,193	14,826	56,019	55,670	349	...
Nagpur ...	80,030	50,978	131,008	105,270	25,738	...
Chanda ...	71,169	9,295	80,464	77,850	2 614	...
Bhandara ...	94 295	26,052	120,347	103,170	17 177	...
Balaghat ...	25,338	3 443	28,781	53,250	...	24,469
Total ...	312,025	104,594	416 619	395,210	45,878	24,469
				Net surplus	21,409	

Thus Balaghat had to face a grave deficiency, while only in Nagpur was there any substantial surplus, which was mostly held up by the cultivating classes, thus forcing the large cities of Nagpur and Kamptee to import food from outside. Bhandara had to import largely for the benefit of Balaghat, and there was a further tendency in Bhandara to lock up its local food supplies in its villages in case of future need.

Imports were as follows :—

		Tons.
March quarter		4,745
June ,, ...		19,864
September ,, ...		8,818
October		2,420
	Total ...	35,847

These are the total rail-borne imports of the Nagpur Division; it will be observed that they exceed by 10,000 tons the deficiency in Balaghat.

Chhattisgarh Division.

District.	*Kharif*, 1896.	*Rabi*, 1897.	Total.	Requirements for 10 months.	Surplus.	Deficit.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Raipur ...	130,649	35,730	166,379	174,800	...	8,421
Bilaspur ...	76893	37,180	114,073	144,400	...	30,327
Sambalpur ...	135.434	4,880	140 314	65,150	75.164	..
Total ...	342,976	77,790	420,766	384,350	75,164	38,748
				Net surplus	36,416	

The surplus in Sambalpur was utilised for export far and wide; in Raipur the deficiency was made up for by stocks in the Dhamtari or southern Tahsil; and even in Bilaspur there were some stocks at the beginning of the year.

The Division as a whole continued to export throughout the year, the exports being :—

	Tons.
March quarter	38,330
June „	7,743
September „	3,108
Total ...	49,181

The local trade returns however show that both Raipur and Bilaspur imported considerable quantities of food grain, and that in the case of the latter the net imports were about 6,000 tons.

Summary of the information regarding prices and food-stocks.

55. The foregoing estimates of food-stocks and production, and the account of the movements of food-grains, it must again be said, are merely approximate statements of the situation in the various districts. But, taken together with the figures which trace the course of prices, they all point in one direction. The correspondence between them may not be exact, but it is not imaginary. If we sum up in a single table the information of this Chapter, we find it indicating very clearly where distress was most severe :—

District.	Outturn of all crops (100 = full outturn on normal area).	+Surplus or − Deficit in food supply.	Highest price of cheapest grain, seers per rupee.	Excess over normal price of highest price.
		Tons.		
Sambalpur ...	70	+75,000	8·25	94
Nagpur ...	56	+25,000	8·62	120
Chanda ...	52	+2,500	7·69	110
Nimar ...	50	+4,500	7·53	139
Chhindwara ...	49	+20,000	7·60	136
Wardha ...	45	+350	8·00	125
Jubbulpore ...	41	+14,000	9·00	88
Saugor ...	35	−18,000	8·23	82
Betul ...	35	+9,000	6·40	182
Bhandara ...	34	+1,700	7·50	100
Narsinghpur ...	33	−12,000	7·53	112
Raipur ...	33	−8,000	7·50	140
Seoni ...	32	+4,000	8·50	100
Hoshangabad ...	31	−3,000	7·46	127
Damoh ...	27	−18,000	6·66	170
Mandla ...	27	−19,000	7·75	194
Bilaspur ...	27	−30,000	7·11	167
Balaghat ...	17	−25,000	6·25	188

In the first six districts named such famine as there was was a famine of high prices, distress due to severe failure of crops being confined to small local areas. In the last four distress was most acute. In the intervening eight districts it was severe.

Migration.

56. Hitherto in this Chapter the pressure of famine in the shape of high prices and insufficiency of food has been under examination. The effects of this pressure on the lives of the people are reflected in the movements which took place among them and in the increase of crime.

Migration in normal times.

Allusion has already been made in the first Chapter of this Report to the custom prevalent among the hill people of the Province of migrating annually to the plains at the time of the wheat harvest. Besides the movements of this kind which take place within the Province (chiefly from the Satpura districts to the Nerbudda valley), there is annually a large influx of harvest labour from the Baghelkhand and neighbouring Bundelkhand States into the rich level country of Jubbulpore. There is also another well-known migration, that of the labouring population of the Nagpur country (principally from the Wainganga rice districts, commonly called the *Jhári* or forest country) to the cotton tracts of Wardha and Berar for cotton-picking and the harvesting of *juar* or large millet. A similar movement takes place from the Hoshangabad side to the cotton country of Nimar and Khandesh.

These are ordinary harvesting movements, and constitute the only spontaneous migration of the people of the Province. Of late years, however, emigration to Assam has sprung up and developed considerably under the stimulus of recruiting agencies. The chief centres of the operations of these agencies are Jubbulpore, Bilaspur, Sambalpur and Balaghat, but the recruiting operations extend over the districts adjacent to these, and special efforts are made to secure emigrants of aboriginal race, who are found best suited to stand the climate of Assam. This emigration is carried on in two ways: first, by contractors and garden sardars (the latter working under the supervision of local agents) under Act I of 1882; and secondly, by unlicensed contractors and recruiters working outside that Act. Accurate statistics are only available for the first kind of emigration, the emigrants being registered before removal from the Province. No exact figures can be furnished for the second class, as it is not subject to the control of the local authorities. It is known, however, that the numbers so sent away in 1896 and 1897 were large.

Besides these migrations in search of work, there is a steady flow of pilgrims across the Province from north to south, bound for the holy places in Southern India, chiefly Jagannáth in Orissa, Rameshwaram in Tinnevelly, and Násik the source of the Godavari. The Great Northern Road from Mirzapur to Jubbulpore is the main route chosen by these wanderers; on arriving at Jubbulpore the stream divides, those bound for Jagannáth taking the road *viâ* Mandla and Bilaspur, those for Rameshwaram that *viâ* Seoni and Nagpur, and those for Násik the road down the Nerbudda valley. Other routes southwards used by pilgrims are those *viâ* Betul and Chhindwara into Berar. Such wanderers formed a substantial proportion of the population of the poor-houses in the northern districts during the famine.

Inrush of wanderers in the north of the Province.

57. In the year 1896-97 the annual migrations took place on a much extended scale; the flow of persons who enter the Province from the north and cross the Satpuras on their way to Berar and Southern India was much larger than usual. In addition there was a great inrush of wanderers into the northern districts from Rewa and the smaller Baghelkhand and Bundelkhand States, and from Bhopal across the Nerbudda. The districts of Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore were invaded by crowds of these strangers, who in and out of season came flocking to towns, works and poor-houses. Many of them were in a state of great emaciation, and large numbers succumbed to famine diseases before help could be given them. Residents of Rewa and even of Allahabad were found wandering in the Mandla jungles. Some of these aliens managed to make their way across the Satpuras into the Nagpur country, but these were not very numerous.

People from the rice districts in the Nagpur country.

The districts of Nagpur and Wardha were, however, themselves overrun at the end of 1896 by crowds of people from Balaghat and the affected portions of Bhandara. These had started for the cotton-picking in Berar on the failure of the rice crop in their homes. They found themselves unable to obtain employment there, and soon turned back. They crowded into the towns of the Wardha and Nagpur Districts in a pitiable condition, and made up the great majority of the relief-workers and poor-house inmates in these two districts during the early months of the famine.

Chhattisgarh.

The barriers of hill and forest which shut in Chhattisgarh on the north prevented any such crowd of aliens penetrating there, but a certain influx of persons from the neighbouring Feudatory States was reported, and a great many people from Bilaspur wandered over into Sambalpur, the land of plenty, and swelled the crime roll of that district.

Starving wanderers in Jubbulpore Division.

58. Of all these movements, however, the most constant and the largest was that from the Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand States into the Vindhyan Districts and Jubbulpore, which was independent of any harvesting movement and became a veritable invasion of destitute and starving paupers. In Saugor a census taken on the 20th January disclosed the following figures:—

Total on relief	... ...	27,432
Foreigners	... ...	3,475
Other districts of the Central Provinces	...	749
Other Provinces	... ...	1,462
Native States	... ...	1,264

On the 20th March a similar census showed the following:—

	In Poor-houses.	On works.
Total ...	3,497	32,500
Foreigners ...	955	3,992
Other districts of the Central Provinces	142	...
Other Provinces ...	331	1,913
Native States ...	482	2,079

In Damoh immigration of this kind was still larger. In January the Deputy Commissioner found that 70 per cent. of the wanderers on the road from Hatta to Damoh belonged to Native States. In February 1,500 aliens were made over to the Darbars of the States to which they belonged, but by June they were coming back again and had learnt to deny their place of origin. The extent to which these aliens came to Damoh may be seen from the following figures:—

Months.	Total number.		Number of aliens.
January ...	4,371	(on two works) ...	773
February ...	20,805	(all works and poor-houses) ...	1,503
April ...	15,180	(all works) ...	305
May ...	9,523	(all works) ...	170
July 12th ...	3,607	(one work) ...	318
„ 24th ...	14,200	(on two works) ...	720
October 10th ...	620	(all poor-houses) ...	117

When works were being closed and there was no longer any reason for concealing their place of origin, of 5,481 employed 1,010 were found to be aliens; and on the last work that was closed of 1,167 sent to their homes 569 were aliens.

In Jubbulpore also the influx of aliens formed a feature of grave difficulty in famine administration, and great numbers of them were deported to the States from which they came under arrangements made with the Political Agent. In the six months from January to June 1897 inclusive, of 3,240 deaths which occurred in the poor-houses of the Jubbulpore District, only 1,682 were of persons belonging to the Central Provinces; 1,231 were of residents in Native States, and 327 of wanderers from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.

In April, of 68,852 persons on works 4,919 were declared aliens. Those who came for the wheat harvest mostly returned with their earnings, but there was a large further influx in the rains. The population of the three chief poor-houses was thus made up in the months of July, August, September and October:—

	Belonging to the Central Provinces.	Aliens.
July	1,007	960
August	963	1,132
September	421	615
October	444	791

Many of these aliens were drafted to relief camps, and one large camp (Nigri, south of Jubbulpore) consisted almost entirely of aliens. At one time, in the middle of July, there were 828 residents of Central India in the Murwara poor-house. During the rains 2,959 persons were sent back to Native States, and 353 to the North-Western Provinces.

Wandering in other districts during the famine.

59. No similar details are forthcoming of immigrants from Bhopal to the Nerbudda valley districts. There were large numbers of them on the various works who denied their origin, as they did not wish to be deported. Many gave themselves out as inhabitants of villages in British territory, and it was only when drafts were made to village relief that local enquiry disclosed that these persons had never been heard of in the villages to which they had declared themselves to belong. It may be noted however that on the 22nd December, 47 per cent. of the people in the Hoshangabad poor-house were from Bhopal, and that at the commencement of famine operations some 3,000 Bhopalis were found among the workers in Narsinghpur.

The influx of hill tribes to the harvesting in the Nerbudda valley was smaller than usual; many of those who intended to come were met by others returning empty and dissuaded from continuing a vain quest. In Nimar some of the people who came from Hoshangabad for the *kharif* harvest stayed in the district, but there was not much wandering. Khandwa received a good many strangers from Holkar's territory and Bhopal, and, being on the road to Násik, pilgrims were numerous there. The number of starving wanderers fed by the Police and passed on to the nearest poor-house or relief-work was 2,143. In July the population of the Khandwa poor-house consisted of 310 people. Of these 100 belonged to Nimar, 100 to other districts of the Central Provinces, and the rest were aliens.

Of the Plateau districts Chhindwara, which is away from the great thoroughfares between Northern and Central India and the south, escaped any large inroad of wanderers, but a considerable number of persons from Bhandara and Balaghat penetrated to the central wheat-growing plateau for the wheat harvest and returned with their earnings. A good many persons from the Jagirs who went off to the Nerbudda valley early in the year stayed there until it was time to sow the autumn crops. Seoni and Betul, on the other hand, being crossed by main thoroughfares, were visited by a great many people on their way from the Nerbudda valley or Central India to Berar and Nagpur. In Seoni from March to October 6,016 persons were fed by the Police, and were mostly wanderers from other parts. The people of Seoni itself did not move about much, and the Deputy Commissioner reports that at the end of the famine only 11 orphans and 4 others were returned to him. In Betul there was a movement in July of Gonds and Korkus to the weeding operations in the plains of Berar below, and the local works absorbed a good many strangers. When works were being closed at the end of the famine, from a fourth to a third of the remnant left consisted of aliens, and on the last work closed, of 533 remaining to disperse to their homes, 181 were foreigners.

In Wardha and Nagpur, as already stated, the chief class of wanderers were the Berar-returned immigrants from the Wainganga rice districts; but most of these were drafted off to works in the districts to which they belonged. There were besides many wanderers from Upper India who had struggled across the Satpuras, and many cases of deaths from privation which occurred in Wardha or Nagpur were among people of this kind, or among the strangers from the rice districts. In the rains the Berar authorities began to send across

the border many persons who had gone there for weeding, and, owing to misunderstanding of orders by the subordinate officials of Berar, several persons were returned who had been settled in that Province for years. About 1,000 of these wanderers were relieved at the Bori kitchen in Nagpur during the months of October and November 1897. Throughout the period of famine, and exclusive of those who came to Nagpur and Kamptee and could not be easily traced, the Nagpur Police reported the entry of 15,882 strangers, of whom 3,729 settled in various villages in the district.

In Chanda, the only migration calling for notice was towards the road work opened early in 1897 in the eastern zamindari of Ambagarh-Chauki. About 2,000 of the 5,500 employed there were immigrants from neighbouring Feudatory States, Nandgaon and Khairagarh, and over 100 paupers from the same locality were fed at the kitchen opened in connection with the work. About 350 of the immigrants appeared at the end of the famine to have settled permanently.

In Bhandara such wandering as took place was almost confined to the first three months of the famine, and out of 2,884 meals supplied by the Police to wanderers, 1,956 related to the early period. A certain number of persons from Balaghat came to the road works near the border of that district, but on the whole there was very little movement of the people, beyond the annual migration to Berar, and the harvesting operations in the rich Pauni tract in the south-west of the district. In a census taken in January at some of the works it was found that out of 11,014 employed, 9,087 belonged to the district, 1,918 to other districts of the Central Provinces (mainly to Balaghat), 5 to other Provinces and 4 only to Native States.

In Balaghat the chief feature in the direction of migration was the departure of the people to Berar and other districts. The only immigrants in search of work who came to the district were a few from the neighbouring Feudatories. At the close of 1897, when works were being closed and workers returned to their homes, many were given help sufficient to take them on their usual journey for the cotton-picking in Berar, but with an excellent rice harvest and the memories of their sufferings of the previous year a much smaller number than usual undertook the journey.

The comparatively small extent to which wandering took place in Chhattisgarh has already been referred to in paragraph 57.

Emigration to Assam during the famine.

60. Emigration to Assam from the Central Provinces undoubtedly received a large impetus from the prevailing distress, but the bulk of the emigrants left before the middle of 1897. The emigration is brisk in the cold weather and stops altogether during the rains. The exact numbers who resorted to Assam from the Central Provinces during 1897 will, owing to the cause explained above (paragraph 56), not be known until the annual report of the Assam Administration on labour immigration for that year is published. The greater number of these passed through the depôts at Bilaspur, and being recruited outside the Act, were not registered. It is believed that approximately 25,000 persons were despatched to the labour districts. It is known that owing to the large despatches of the season 1896-97, the emigration since the commencement of the present season in October 1897 has been much slacker than usual.

For Jubbulpore the following details have been furnished :—

Year.	Number registered.	Estimates of despatches by unlicensed Contractors.	Total.
1895	3,422	8,000	11,422
1896	1,528	4,000	5,528
1897	5,555	1,000	6,555

Of the number registered the place of origin was as follows :—

Of Jubbulpore District	...	...	...	2,066
„ Mandla „	...	...	...	1,699
„ Damoh „	...	...	...	290
„ Seoni „	...	...	...	226
„ Narsinghpur „	...	...	...	229
„ Central India States	...	...	...	920
„ Other places	...	...	...	125
		Total	...	5,555

In Balaghat some 2,000 persons passed through the Local Agent's hands. In Raipur there were 697 registered. From Bilaspur, as already mentioned, many emigrants were sent without registration, and the Deputy Commissioner is unable to report the number who left. The people who went to Assam were, as usual, of the labouring classes, and even from Balaghat, where agriculture was more depressed than anywhere else, it is reported that none of the cultivating classes were among the emigrants. The greater number of emigrants were of aboriginal races, chiefly Kols, Gonds and Baigas.

Summary of migration.

61. Putting aside this assisted and organised emigration to Assam, it may be said generally of the migratory movements of the people during the famine that these were either confined to movements among foreigners, accustomed to roam far afield in search of employment, or exaggerations of the annual harvesting movements. The persons who wandered in were largely caught by the relief-works, poor-houses and kitchens, or received much of the private charity administered at the doors of the wealthy.

The people who always stay at home remained there, and, except where they are accustomed to visiting towns in search of work, the greatest difficulty was experienced in inducing them to move. Even in the wildest tracts whole villages did not desert, and in some of the Baiga forest settlements in Mandla, where no organized relief was administered and forest produce was the mainstay, it has been found that the inhabitants, though suffering losses in numbers from privation and disease, kept to their homesteads. Writing of the Gonds of his district, the Deputy Commissioner of Seoni describes their unwillingness to move in words which might be applied to Gond villages all over the Province :—"Scattered about in small villages," he says, "they will sit down and die rather than go to a relief work only a few miles off." He adds: "It was difficult to find the distressed persons, so little were they in evidence before the net-work of kitchens was started." An interesting account of similar phenomena among the Gonds of Mandla will be found in a note on Famine Administration in that District by Mr. H. Sharp, printed as an Appendix to this Report.

Crime.

Offences against property.

62. Another measure of the pressure of famine on the people is afforded by the increase of crime, and especially of petty crime. The statement attached to this Report contains details of offences under the following heads during the last three years in each district of the Province :—

Dacoities.
Robberies.
House-trespass.
House-breaking—
  With theft of grain and food.
  Others.
Cattle thefts.
Theft—
  Of grain and food.
  Others.

For the Province as a whole the following are the total figures for each of the last three years under these heads :—

1895	... 21,781
1896	... 29,117
1897	... 42,826

Organized raids.

In 1896 crime began to increase considerably in the districts of the Jubbulpore Division, and during the hot weather, in Seoni of that Division and in Bilaspur, grain raids and dacoities technically so-called were perpetrated. The *modus operandi* of these raids, in which women and children took part, was the collection at the door of some person known to possess grain of a large crowd of people on a dark night, the men armed with clubs, and the women and children carrying baskets to take away the grain. Frightened by the noise and shouting, the owner of the house would make his escape through the back premises, leaving the crowd to force their way in and carry off his store of grain. As a rule, no other property was taken, and the inmates of the house were not otherwise molested. Offences of this kind, however, never spread to a serious extent. Additional police were drafted to the localities where disturbances had occurred, and the offenders were summarily dealt with. It was frequently found that many of the perpetrators of these outrages were persons in no sense distressed.

During the famine offences of this kind continued sporadically, although the returns do not show them to have been numerous. In most instances they were treated in the crime registers as simple thefts and tried as such, although technically, from the number of persons engaged and the forcible nature of their proceedings, they amounted to dacoities. The following are the figures for dacoities and robberies during the three years :—

			Dacoities.	Robberies.
1895	...	...	41	146
1896	...	...	121	185
1897	...	.	161	267

Two cases of this kind of crime, however, stand out from the rest. In the Chhindwara Jagirs one village organized raids of this kind, and had committed seven such raids upon its neighbours before any one was found bold enough to make a complaint to the Police. When news was received, these outrages were promptly stopped. The second case occurred in Chanda, where two villages took to organized raids of this kind. This was a more serious affair, as general plunder was resorted to : the arrest of the ring-leaders, and the establishment of punitive police in the offending villages, sufficed to stay these outbursts.

Course of crime during the famine.

63. In the districts of Jubbulpore, Saugor and Damoh, where distress had existed in the previous years among the poorer classes, the increase in crime during the famine proper was not very marked, but elsewhere it was very large, and the number of offences against property rose by 50 to 150 per cent. The offence, of all others, which increased most largely was theft of cattle which were killed and used for food, the figures of which are :—

1895	... 1,364
1896	... 2,441
1897	... 6,504

It is likely that a great many offences of this kind were not reported or were merely entered as cases of cattle strayed. The perpetrators of this class of crime were almost invariably Gonds, with whom abstention from beef is a recent institution, or, in the Chhattisgarh Districts, Chamars, who are everywhere accustomed to eat cow's flesh.

Offences connected with theft of grain or of cattle for food aggregated 20,051 out of a total of 42,826 offences under the heads specified. In 1895 such offences were only 7,333 out of a total under these heads of 21,781. The two periods of

the famine at which crime was most prevalent were January and February 1897 and July and August of the same year. This has been the universal experience common to all districts. In the first two months there was a pause in agricultural labour between the two harvests, while the ripening crops and harvested autumn produce invited marauders. After this, harvest earnings, the *mahua* crop, and the great extension of relief which took place in the hot weather months, induced a lull in crime. July and August are always months in which crime increases. The conditions of life are hard. Heavy rain interferes with employment, and dark wet nights encourage theft. During the famine these two months were specially hard for the poor. Prices were very high, and employment was restricted with many competitors for it. It is not surprising that crime increased.

The following statement shows for 1895 and for 1897 the number of offences against property per 10,000 of the population, and the number in which the object of the theft was food :—

District.	Total number of offences.		Number of offences per 10 000 of the population			
			In which food was the object of theft.		Total.	
	1895.	1897.	1895.	1897.	1895.	1897.
Saugor ...	2,371	2,674	13	25	40	45
Damoh ...	975	1,388	10	15	29	42
Jubbulpore ...	2,861	3 977	12	18	38	53
Mandla ...	627	1,799	7	28	18	53
Seoni ...	829	1,731	11	27	22	47
Narsinghpur ...	1,529	2,144	12	20	41	58
Hoshangabad ...	1,044	1.684	5	13	20	32
Nimar ...	258	647	3	10·5	10	26
Betul ...	475	1,675	9	33	15	52
Chhindwara ...	729	1,613	8	21	18	40
Wardha ...	816	1,409	3	13	20	35
Nagpur ...	1,477	3,339	4	13	19	43
Chanda ...	1,009	1,599	6	12	14	22
Bhandara ...	834	1 591	5	12	11	21
Balaghat ...	788	1,878	11	28	21	42
Raipur ...	1,568	5 334	25	18	10	34
Bilaspur ...	1,253	4,278	3	20	11	37
Sambalpur ...	2 338	4,075	10	21	29	50

The districts in which, in normal times, as represented by the year 1895, the proportion of thefts connected with food falls below 33 per cent. of the total offences are as under :—

Jubbulpore Division.		Nerbudda Division.		Nagpur Division.		Chhattisgarh Division.	
	Per cent.		Per cent.		Per cent.		Per cent.
Saugor ...	32	Narsinghpur ...	33	Wardha ...	15	Raipur ...	25
Jubbulpore ...	31	Hoshangabad ...	25	Nagpur ...	21	Bilaspur ...	27
		Nimar ...	30				

In the following districts the normal percentage exceeds 50 per cent:—

	Per cent.
Seoni	50
Betul	60
Balaghat	52

In the famine year this proportion has risen everywhere, and exceeds 50 per cent. of the total in all the following districts:—

	Per cent.		Per cent.
Saugor	... 55	Chanda	... 54
Mandla	... 53	Bhandara	... 57
Seoni	... 57	Balaghat	... 67
Betul	... 63	Raipur	... 53
Chhindwara	... 52	Bilaspur	... 53

The above list includes most of the severely distressed districts; the only district the absence of which from the list evokes surprise is Damoh. The proportion of cattle thefts per 10,000 of the population affords another instructive comparison. If the districts in which such offences fell at 4 or under per 10,000 of the population are put out of account, the following are eliminated:—Hoshangabad, Nimar, Wardha, Nagpur, Chanda, Bhandara, Sambalpur. In the remaining districts the proportion was as stated below:—

	Number of cattle thefts per 10,000 of population.
Damoh	... 5·6
Jubbulpore	... 5·7
Raipur	... 6·0
Chhindwara	... 6·3
Narsinghpur	... 7·1
Betul	... 7·2
Saugor	... 8·4
Bilaspur	... 9·4
Seoni	... 10·2
Balaghat	... 13·0
Mandla	... 16·7

This class of offence was most prevalent where the aboriginal population is large; among the eight most criminal districts are found the whole of those situated in the Satpuras.

Scarcity of Fodder and Water, and consequent loss of Cattle.

Loss of cattle owing to drought.

64. The subject of the theft of cattle for food leads to the general question of the mortality among cattle during the year of the famine. As the famine was occasioned by drought, it would be natural to suppose that heavy mortality occurred among them owing to scarcity of fodder and water. Of this, however, there is no evidence of much value. The waste lands of the Province are greatly in excess of the grazing requirements, and since the forests were generally opened for free grazing or the collection of grazing rates was postponed, abundant fodder was available for the cattle, although the total amount may possibly have been somewhat less than usual. The number of cattle slaughtered for food or for their hides, not only at places like the Garhakota fair in Saugor, or that at Chhapára in Seoni, but over the Province generally, was larger than usual. These were the surplus and useless cattle whose retention at any time is a waste of money and fodder. But, on the other hand, epidemic disease was much less prevalent than in the preceding year, and actual deaths from want of water or fodder were comparatively few. In several districts the rain of November and the showers of the cold weather months and early summer increased the supply of grass, while the rain of the monsoon of 1896 before the drought began had been unusually heavy.

The general opinion of district officers is that, save for the loss by slaughter of animals for food, the mortality among cattle was low. The only districts from which complaints come are Hoshangabad, Betul, Wardha and Nagpur. These had less cold weather rain than most, and the last two are possessed of less extensive grazing grounds than most districts of the Province. Stall fodder was no doubt very expensive, juar stalks reaching the price of Rs. 60 per 1,000 bundles, or about double the usual hot-weather price, but the price of grass was not so abnormally high. It is stated of Nagpur that 75 per cent. of the mortality took place in the rains, and was due to the cattle greedily eating the rank vegetation after being half starved during the hot weather. In Wardha, where mortality statistics of cattle were compiled in detail, the returned mortality is less than 10 per cent.,—not a large mortality for animals whose average duration of life does not exceed 10 years. In Betul scarcity of water was doubtless experienced in certain parts, but this want is felt every year in some of the plateau tracts of that district. In Hoshangabad only is it definitely stated that the mortality among cattle was very high, but the Deputy Commissioner's allegation that 30 per cent. of the cattle in the district died could not possibly be accepted unless supported by definite statistics which are not forthcoming.

Bearing of exports of hides on mortality of cattle.

65. Trade statistics, however, indicate a large increase in mortality of cattle due to the animals being slaughtered for food or for their hides. The exports of hides and skins during the last few years of bad seasons have been increasing, as the people have parted with superfluous cattle. The following figures show this very clearly :—

Year.	Exports of hides and skins. Maunds.
1892-93	... 77,058
1893-94	... 55,455
1894-95	... 90,719
1895-96	... 105,318

The above figures may be compared with those of the two years of drought :—

October 1st to September 30th.

1895-96.	1896-97.
119 327	133 878

The exports of the famine year were thus divided between the several trade divisions :—

	Maunds.
Jubbulpore	... 37,226
Nerbudda	... 7,161
Nimar	... 5,114
Nagpur	... 39,161
Chhattisgarh	... 45,216

Although, therefore, it may be accepted on the testimony of district officers that the losses of useful agricultural animals from scarcity of fodder and water were not extraordinarily large, it is certain that the impoverished condition of the people led to the slaughter of large numbers of superfluous cattle. The figures for the Nerbudda Division do not support the statement of the Deputy Commissioner of Hoshangabad as to the excessive mortality among the cattle of his district.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROGRESS OF THE FAMINE AND HISTORY OF THE RELIEF MEASURES ADOPTED.

66. The story of the seasons which preceded the final failure of 1896-97 and the consequent onset of the famine has been told in the first Chapter of this narrative. The effects of the failure on prices and food-stocks, the movements of grain, and the pressure of famine as evidenced by migration and crime, have been sketched in the second Chapter, and the history of the development of distress and the measures taken by the Administration for its relief has now to be narrated.

Action taken on apprehension of famine.

It has been seen that till late in September the autumn crops of 1896 promised extremely well, and that it was only in the latter half of that month that threatenings of failure began to accumulate. On the 1st October, when there seemed to be cause for grave anxiety, all Commissioners were asked to report forthwith on the situation, stating the areas where distress was most likely to occur and the measures of relief deemed necessary. They were also asked to report separately on the results of the autumn harvest as soon as sufficient crop experiments could be made.

As October passed by rainless, and the imminence of famine could no longer be doubted, Commissioners were again addressed on the 22nd of the month, and called upon to submit concise estimates of the probable requirements for the remainder of the Financial year 1896-97 under the following heads :—

(1) Works under the Public Works Department or to be carried out on estimates prepared by that Department.

(2) Minor works under District agency.

(3) Poor-houses and childrens' kitchens.

(4) Gratuitous relief outside poor-houses.

(5) Miscellaneous.

They were also asked to state what part of the total expenditure could be met from local funds or from private charity.

On the 20th October Executive Engineers were instructed by the Chief Engineer to prepare, in communication with District Officers, an emergent Budget of famine-relief requirements; and on the 24th October instructions were given by the same officer in regard to the Public Works organization to be adopted, with some suggestions for the most useful employment of famine labour. On the 27th October the Chief Engineer circulated to Executive Engineers a letter, which had previously been sent on the 13th October by the Commissioner of Settlements to the Commissioners of the Jubbulpore, Nagpur and Chhattisgarh Divisions, regarding the utilization of tanks—whether the clearing or repair of those existing, or the construction of new ones—for the purposes of relief works.

At the same time a preliminary report (No. C-451, dated the 23rd October) on the situation was sent to the Government of India, and an immediate grant of five lakhs of rupees asked for and obtained for urgent famine expenditure.

The interval before receipt of replies from Commissioners was utilised for the issue of circular orders to the heads of Departments directing them to arrange for the instruction of their subordinates in the duties imposed on them by the Famine Code in times of scarcity and famine. Conferences were also arranged with the Commissioners of the Nerbudda and Jubbulpore Divisions, which took place on the 15th October and 3rd November respectively, and at these the general situation was ascertained, and instructions indicating the lines to be followed in dealing with distress decided upon. Early in November the Chief Commissioner proceeded to Nagpur and discussed the situation in that Division also with the

Commissioner and the local officers. In the meantime Mr. Carey, the Commissioner of Settlements, had been deputed, on account of his great local experience of Chhattisgarh, to visit Raipur and tour rapidly though the portions where the greatest distress was apprehended in that district, and on the 20th November Mr. Lyall himself visited Raipur, and, with the aid of Mr. Carey's examination of the situation, fully discussed the affairs of the Chhattisgarh Division with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners of the three districts.

Preparation for opening relief works.

67. Meanwhile, the schemes of famine relief works were being examined and revised in the light of present needs in the Public Works Department of the Administration, and exhaustive lists of works were drawn up for every district of the Province. From these lists, in consultation with Commissioners, a selection was made of schemes to be put in hand at once; and of these several were begun in November, and many more in December 1896. Pending the preparation of these schemes, "test works" under the provisions of the Famine Code were opened on a small scale in the districts of the Nerbudda and Chhattisgarh Divisions, mainly at the cost of District Funds: in the Jubbulpore Division, as already indicated, works had been in operation since the spring of 1896, and no fresh test of distress was necessary. These test works, however, did not satisfactorily answer the purpose: the counter-attractions of the autumn harvest caused them to be poorly attended, although the increasing number of beggars and wanderers in the poor-houses proved the existence of distress. By the middle of December regular relief works had everywhere taken their place as the backbone of famine relief operations.

The programmes of works sanctioned, as already mentioned, were divided into two lists:—

A.—Works calculated to meet any possible development of distress.

B.—A selection out of this list of works which it was considered would suffice for present requirements, and were to be put in hand at once.

The orders on each divisional list conveying sanction to it were passed on the following dates:—

Nagpur	...	27th November 1896.
Nerbudda	...	30th November 1896.
Jubbulpore	...	4th December 1896.
Chhattisgarh	...	Do. do.

These lists made the following provision for large relief works:—

District.	Programme A.		Programme B.	
	Number of works.	Estimated cost.	Number of works.	Estimated cost.
		Rs.		Rs.
Nagpur	33	9,02 887	20	5.79 935
Nerbudda	30	26,72 871	19	5.74 038
Jubbulpore	52	59,21,550	38	9,81,700
Chhattisgarh	22	10,09,500	10	4,87,800
Total	137	1,05,06,808	87	26,23 473

In addition to the above, in the Nerbudda Division the collection of a double coat of metal for existing class I and II roads was provided for. These programmes were added to and revised from time to time as relief operations

progressed, and in their final shape will be found attached as Appendix A to the Report by the Chief Engineer on Famine Relief Works under the Public Works Department, annexed to this Report.

Control and supervision of large famine relief works.

68. A very important question which early arose for decision was the manner in which these works should be carried out, supervised and accounted for. The Central Provinces Famine Code (Section 50) contemplates that the officer in charge of a famine relief work shall ordinarily be subordinate to the Deputy Commissioner and to him alone; and the action at first taken in this Province was in accordance with the Code. But it soon became apparent that under this system the Deputy Commissioner was over-taxed and impeded in giving his attention to other necessary forms of relief. Valuable assistance in considering the question was derived from the experience of the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh during the scarcity in Bundelkhand in 1896, as expressed in the Resolution of that Government, dated the 20th October 1896; and early in December it was decided, at a Conference held at Jubbulpore, that the conduct of large relief works entered in the Public Works Department programme should be taken over by that Department. A General Order, conveying complete instructions as to the management of such works, was issued on the 26th December 1896, and all the works which had been begun by Civil Officers were rapidly transferred to the executive charge of the Public Works Department.

Local works of relief.

69. The Jubbulpore and Nerbudda Divisions are those which offer least scope for useful minor local works under Civil officers, or for private works constructed by landholders out of their own funds or from funds borrowed from the State; in the distressed districts of the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh Divisions, on the other hand, which are the rice country of the Central Provinces, an almost unlimited field exists for the construction and improvement of tanks and embankments for holding up water,—works which are of great permanent utility to the cultivation of the country, as well as most valuable as a means of employment for the people in their villages, thus operating to keep up the health and strength of those disinclined to go any distance in search of labour on the large road works. For such works a special grant of 5 lakhs was obtained from the Government of India in 1896-97, and a further grant of 10 lakhs in 1897-98, from which loans were given on favourable terms as to remission of interest and a proportion of the principal to landholders in the distressed districts.

The details of works of this description undertaken in the various districts from public, loan, or private funds will be discussed further on under the appropriate head. Suffice it to say at this point that works of this description were carried out on a very large scale (at first from private funds and loans under the Land Improvement Act, and subsequently from special Famine loans) in the rice districts of Chanda, Bhandara and Balaghat, Raipur and Bilaspur, and to a less extent in other districts, until they were closed on the setting-in of the monsoon. But valuable as these works undoubtedly were, they were merely subsidiary to the large Public Works Department road works, which were always contemplated as the main feature and backbone of work relief.

Measures for gratuitous relief.

70. Such were the steps taken for providing relief by employment during the last three months of 1896. At the same time measures were devised for organizing gratuitous relief. The poor-houses already in existence in the Jubbulpore Division were extended, and many were opened in other parts of the Province. In several districts these commenced by the organization of local institutions for almsgiving supported by private contributions; but by degrees all these were taken over by Government, and brought into conformity with the provisions of the Code. In the Jubbulpore Division the large extent to which immigration from the adjacent Native States set in, and wanderers from other districts made their appearance, necessitated the temporary establishment of what were called "Relief Centres," which were devised as an expedient to catch such wanderers before they had become reduced by too long journeying, and to collect them in places where they could be fed

and, when convalescent, given some light labour until they were fit for transfer to the nearest large relief-work. This was, as originally contemplated, a strictly temporary expedient pending the organization of more highly elaborated forms of relief, and in most districts it fell into disuse as the necessity disappeared. In Jubbulpore, however, the embarrassing influx of emaciated persons from Baghelkhand caused these centres, especially in the extreme north of the district, to become overcrowded; and it was some time before they were brought under proper regulation. In wild localities such as the Mandla District and the north of Chhindwara, where the regular visitation of villages offered great difficulties, the centres were utilized as a substitute for village relief, infirm persons being collected at them for gratuitous support; and in this form the institution continued until the end of the famine. In other Divisions they did not take root, nor were they really needed, the Police Stations on the main routes sufficing for the assistance of such wanderers as required relief.

Under orders issued early in November, the preparation of the list of persons permanently incapable of supporting themselves, with no one able and bound to support them, was likewise put in hand during this period, and the distribution of relief to such persons was undertaken in the various districts from time to time as the lists were prepared and the distress developed.

Ad interim relief in the Jubbulpore Division.

71. Such being the general measures adopted during the closing months of 1896 for the organization of the various forms of relief, it is convenient to glance back for a moment at the development of the distress which was meanwhile going on. It was shown in the first Chapter that measures for relief were in force in the districts of the Jubbulpore Division during the hot weather and rains of 1896. These measures continued during October and November until they merged in the general scheme of relief organized over the whole Province. The numbers who found employment or relief in the districts of that Division during the months of October and November were as follows:—

		On Railway.	Roads and Tanks.	Poor-houses.	Total.
October ...	Saugor ...	6,554	690	1,582	8 826
	Damoh ...	5,326	59	665	6 050
	Jubbulpore ...	2 128	3 655	1,776	7,559
	Mandla ...	.....	2 962	160	3,122
	Seoni ...	.....	150	80	230
	Total ...	14,008	7 516	4,263	25 787
November ...	Saugor ...	6 286	805	1 260	8 351
	Damoh ...	15,500	146	539	16,185
	Jubbulpore ...	3 259	3 545	2,663	9,467
	Mandla ...	.....	4,276	177	4,453
	Seoni ...	.....	455	117	572
	Total ...	25,045	9,227	4 756	39,028

It may be noticed with reference to these figures that, apart from those employed on the railway, which chiefly attracted the able-bodied and was worked to some extent by imported labour, the numbers on roads and in poor-houses

decreased during October and did not show much increase in November. These numbers for the Division as a whole were as follows:—

	Roads and Tanks.	Poor-houses.	Total.
Middle of September	10,101	4 671	14,772
Do. October	7 516	4,263	11,779
Do. November	9,227	4,756	13,983

The effect of the autumn harvest, poor though it was, was thus temporarily to relieve the pressure of August and September, and it was not until December, when the harvesting was nearly completed, that distress began to intensify. This improvement in the condition of the people, as has already been noticed in Chapter I, was further reflected in the reduced death-rates of the last three months of the year which, as compared with that of the preceding months, were as follows in the Province as a whole:—

	Death-rate per mille.
August ...	... 5·27
September ...	... 4·97
October ...	... 4·86
November ...	... 3·79
December ...	... 3·72

The period of harvesting thus afforded the necessary breathing-time which was utilized, as has been shown, for setting on foot the complete schemes of relief.

General view of the development of relief after completion of autumn harvesting.

72. This interval was, however, though extremely valuable, of short duration. The employment on harvesting soon ceased, and the earnings yielded by it were rapidly exhausted. Rising prices pressed more and more hardly upon those dependent on cash wages; and the large proportion of the population which always depends for its support on the charity or piety of others was soon cast on the hands of Government. The development of distress was naturally most rapid in those parts of the Province which had suffered most from previous failures, that is to say in the Jubbulpore Division, as will be seen from the figures below:—

	Jubbulpore Division.		Whole Province.	
	Numbers on relief.	Percentage on total population.	Numbers on relief.	Percentage on total population.
November 30th ...	15,162	0·64	33,925	0·30
December 15th ...	38,571	1·62	69,745	0·64
December 31st ...	92,134	3·92	152 845	1·41
January 15th ...	133,608	5·62	217,762	2 02
January 31st ...	176,620	7·43	293,346	2·72
February 15th ...	185,521	7·80	321,148	2·98

Progress of distress up to the close of the hot weather.

These figures bring us up to the period when the spring crops might have been expected to ease the situation in districts where those crops were of importance. The figures for the month of spring harvesting (March), the fortnight which intervenes between this and the gathering

of the *mahua* crop, the month of April when many persons were drawn away to gather this crop, and the month of May when pressure again began to tighten are given below :—

Fortnight ending	Jubbulpore Division.		Whole Province.	
	Numbers.	Percentage of population on relief.	Numbers.	Percentage of population on relief.
February 28th	169 665	7·14	332 181	3·08
March 15th	170 543	7·19	367 819	3·41
March 31st	205,153	9·02	462,708	4·29
April 15th	202,795	8 53	462,127	4·28
April 30th	226 331	9·95	557,004	5·16
May 15th	241 909	10·18	681,341	6·31
May 31st	241 350	10·16	691 890	6·41

The high-water-mark was thus reached in May, while the advance of distress was shifted from the Jubbulpore Division to other parts of the Province. In the early months of the famine 60 per cent. of the numbers on relief were accounted for by that Division. With the relief that the spring crops gave, which was more marked in parts of that Division than elsewhere, the proportion sank to 34 per cent. of the total.

The numbers given above against each fortnight are the averages of the weekly numbers returned immediately before and after the closing day of the fortnight. The actual highest number reached (in the week ending the 29th May) was 702,999, of whom over 60 per cent. were employed on relief works.

Proportion of various kinds of relief.

73. The extent to which resort to the several kinds of relief gradually developed from December to May may be seen from the following table :—

Date.	Relief works, Public Works Department.	Local works, Civil Officers.	Dependents of workers.	Relief centres and kitchens.	Poor-houses	Village relief.	Total.
December 31st ...	93 175	16,627	4 819	28,753	9,034	437	152 845
February 15th ...	181,707	33,278	38 454	38 266	17 549	11,904	321,148
March 15th ...	218,987	29 253	47 686	21 335	18 148	32,410	367 819
April 15th ...	276 287	44 606	60,518	18,994	19 672	42 050	462 127
May 31st ...	415 474	64,068	86 823	11,458	25 265	83 626	691,890

During this period it will be noticed that relief workers amounted to about 60 per cent. of the total on relief. Local works absorbed between 8 and 10 per cent. (They had occupied from 26 to 40 per cent. during the preceding months of October, November and December, before the Public Works Department took over full charge of relief works.)

Dependents on works rose from 3 to 13 per cent. of the total relieved, that is to say from 5 to 20 per cent. of the total workers.

The poor-house population, which during October and the early part of November, while other relief measures were being organized, had accounted for over 40 per cent. of the total on relief, by the end of December amounted to only 6 per cent. of that total, and gradually fell during the succeeding months to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Relief centres, which were largely resorted to in the Jubbulpore Division during the early part of the famine, absorbed at the beginning of January 20 per cent. of those on relief; but as they were gradually contracted and continued to be of importance only in the wilder tracts, Mandla and the Chhindwara Jagirs, the proportion fell steadily until in the end of May it was only 1·65 per cent. of the total in receipt of relief. They were destined afterwards in the shape of kitchens, chiefly for feeding children, to play an important part in famine administration in the rains.

Village relief was gradually expanded; at the close of December less than 1 per cent. of the numbers assisted was on this form of relief; by the end of May the proportion had risen to 13 per cent.

Action taken by Administration from January to May.

74. During the course of these months, January to May, the Administration was kept busy with the numerous references which the progress of distress and expansion of relief in the several districts necessitated. The Chief Commissioner was constantly on the move during this period, and made a complete tour of the distressed districts, including Mandla and Damoh and the Plateau districts of Seoni, Chhindwara and Betul, conferring everywhere with the local officers on the spot as to the measures to be adopted; and he again visited the Nerbudda Districts and Jubbulpore at the close of April and beginning of May. Among the general matters disposed of were the various forest concessions to be given in the several districts, and the amount of land revenue which was to be remitted or suspended. These subjects will be subsequently referred to in detail. As regards Famine administration proper, the most important matters dealt with were the following:—The opening of kitchens on relief works in order to feed the dependents (especially the children) of the workers; the exaction of adequate tasks from the able-bodied, and the introduction of a system of piece-work wherever workers were in a fit condition to do a full day's labour; the proper management of poor-houses, and the periodical drafting of paupers from them to relief works, or to village relief lists, according as their condition might warrant; the extension of village relief, and the organization of adequate inspecting and controlling agency for securing its efficiency; the arrangement of a system of famine loans with the aid of which, on favourable terms, private landowners and the better class of tenants might be induced to employ both efficient and inefficient labour on works of village improvement; the arrangement of the best means for the selection of tenants to be recipients of loans under the Agriculturists Loans Act or gifts from the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund for the purchase of seed or bullocks, as the case might be, in order to ensure the sowing of the land with autumn crops, and the distribution to them of the sums to be lent or given; the arrangements for the transport of grain to the mountainous parts of Mandla and Balaghat against the time when the rains would render communications difficult or impossible and the resources of private traders would be taxed beyond their powers.

Each of the several matters mentioned above will be specially discussed when the various forms of relief come separately under review.

Action taken to meet monsoon necessities.

75. The next point of departure in the history of the Famine administration was the advent of the monsoon. At this stage the most pressing necessity, if the land was to be cultivated and, by yielding a good return, to bring the famine to an end, was to secure the return of cultivators and village labourers from relief works to their homes in order to carry on the regular agricultural operations of the season. With a view to concerting measures to secure the desired end without unduly limiting facilities for relief, the Chief Commissioner on the 25th May held a conference of officers engaged on famine relief, with the Heads of Departments within reach, at Pachmarhi. So far as the Hoshangabad District was concerned, it was decided, as soon as the monsoon showed signs of approaching—

(1) To close by degrees half the works;

(2) To introduce piece-work, with supplementary task-work charges, on the remainder;

(3) To refuse temporarily admission to applicants not showing signs of privation;

and the proposals were circulated to other Divisions for consideration as to how far similar steps might be adopted there to attain the object in view. The intention was to bring these orders into effect by the middle of June, unless there was any reason to apprehend delay in the advent of the monsoon.

Early monsoon: its effect on numbers.

76. The monsoon arrived somewhat later than usual, but in the third week of June plentiful rain fell throughout the Province, causing a general exodus from the works. On the 23rd June, however, the current suddenly failed, dry west winds set in, and for about three weeks the position seemed very critical. In these circumstances, a great many persons who at first dispersed to their homes for agricultural operations returned to the works, and it was not found possible to close them to the extent first intended. The extent to which the numbers declined over the Province as a whole during June under the policy above indicated, as well as the extent to which the works filled up again in consequence of the delay which the temporary cessation of the monsoon caused to agricultural operations, may be seen from the following figures:—

Fortnight ending	Relief workers.	Dependents.	Civil works.	Poor-houses.	Relief centres and kitchens.	Village relief.	Total.
May 31st, as above stated.	415 474	86,823	64,068	25,265	11 458	88,626	691 890
June 15th ...	372 764	75,358	46,568	28,710	11,104	95,361	629,860
June 30th ...	255,558	44,685	18,532	31,402	9,331	108,917	468 425
July 15th ...	312,882	55,017	19,815	32,316	11,418	124 443	555,891
July 31st ...	327,792	56,256	16,167	30,560	17,608	151,775	601,297

The first, second and third columns of the above statement show that between the 30th May and 30th June more than two-fifths of the workers and dependents left the works, while by the end of July the numbers had risen again by over 91,000; the general impression, however, is that the new-comers were for the most part persons who had not before resorted to the works, but eked out a subsistence during the open months on forest produce. The works under Civil Officers, which chiefly consisted of tanks and other forms of earth-work, were gradually closed. The numbers in poor-houses did not rise much, though there was some accession from wanderers driven in by stress of weather. Kitchens for children began to be extended under the orders to be mentioned below; and village relief assumed greatly increased proportions, and became thenceforward the leading feature of Famine administration.

Instructions issued for relief measures during the rains.

77. On the 2nd July, a Circular was addressed to all Divisions and districts, summarising the points to which attention was to be specially directed. It was pointed out that the refusal to employ able-bodied applicants for labour had been only enjoined as a temporary expedient, and that with the sowings completed, all who applied would have to be admitted to work; that the month of July was, even in ordinary times, a very hard one for the poor, that the usual employment available in August on weeding and transplanting would be much restricted owing to the inability of cultivators to employ labour, and that distress was not likely to diminish until after September when the food supply would be renewed. Rising prices would, it was observed, much contract private charity in the villages, and the necessity of largely extending house-to-house relief was strongly emphasized to meet the deepening distress both in districts in which this system was already in force and in districts in which it had not yet been fully applied. Another matter to which attention was directed in the Circular was the necessity of largely increasing the number

of kitchens, mainly for the relief of children whose parents were unable to support them. "With these two measures," the Circular concluded "—greater extension of village relief and the establishment of relief kitchens—the Chief Commissioner hopes that the dangers of the rainy season may be safely tided over; but this period is one of the most critical of the year, and, as already indicated, calls for the greatest watchfulness on the part of all officers engaged in relief." And to meet these increasing demands on relief establishments Deputy Commissioners were enjoined to apply at once for the additional staff required to carry them out.

A week later, with reference to the large number of dependents in proportion to workers which the weekly returns disclosed, the advisability was enjoined on District Officers of arranging for the drafting of such dependents as far as possible to village relief; it was at the same time directed that adults in obvious need of relief should not be refused food at the Public Works Department kitchens, even though not strictly dependents of workers, and that such persons of this class as did not, after a few days feeding, become fit for work, should be drafted from time to time either to village relief or, if that was impracticable, to poor-houses. It was added that the Public Works Department kitchen should be utilized as a children's relief kitchen for emaciated children living in the neighbourhood, even though they were not dependents of workers.

The Chief Commissioner's tour during the rains.

78. On the 12th July the Chief Commissioner again went on tour, visiting first Bilaspur, where a great and sudden development of distress had occurred, and then the Feudatory State of Raigarh on the Sambalpur border, Raipur, Gondia (where he met the Deputy Commissioners of Bhandara and Balaghat), Nagpur (where he saw the District Officers of Wardha and Chanda), Nimar, Hoshangabad, Narsinghpur, Jubbulpore and Saugor. The monsoon re-commenced, after the three-weeks' break already referred to, between the 10th and 12th July, and from that time forward favourable falls occurred at intervals which enabled agricultural operations to be resumed, and eventually led to an abundant autumn harvest. The necessary operations of the time were weeding, transplanting and thinning of the rice crop, and ploughing for the spring sowings. As a result of his conferences with the District Officers at this time the Chief Commissioner issued orders which will be more fully described below, which had for their object the removal of inducements to able-bodied labourers, who were needed in the fields, to remain on the works, by refusing to them more than the minimum wage, and allowing them that only on the performance of an adequate task. Careful precautions were enjoined as to the separation of the able-bodied from those not capable of a full task by a responsible officer, and it was directed that this system should not be introduced on any work except with the consent of the Commissioner. It was at first resorted to largely only in the Jubbulpore Division, and there had excellent results. Later on, when the first grains of the autumn harvest began to be reaped, it was applied by degrees elsewhere in September and October, and everywhere resulted in quickening the return of efficient labour to that work for which it was greatly needed.

The manner in which these several instructions were given effect to is illustrated by the returns for August, September and October:—

Date.	Relief-works.	Dependents.	Local works under Civil Officers.	Poor-houses.	Relief Centres and Kitchens.	Village relief.	Total.
31st July (as above detailed)...	327,792	56,256	16,167	30,560	17,608	151,775	601,297
15th August ...	283,625	47,218	13,317	29,539	22,076	186,899	584,894
31st do. ...	247,676	37,540	11,790	28,088	30,680	209,900	580,323
15th September ...	238,925	35,749	11,673	24,558	39,583	261,166	606,861
30th do. ...	223,736	36,064	11,783	20,266	46,108	294,064	630,964
15th October ...	177,614	27,524	6,888	16,938	51,986	300,701	581,651

Effect of measures during rains and early autumn on numbers and mode of relief.

The figures show very clearly how efforts were concentrated on getting the people back to their villages, and, if need were, feeding them there until such time as the new food supplies should become available and a fall of prices ease the pressure on the poor. For this purpose relief-works were closed where circumstances admitted, and the work made as unpalatable as possible to the able-bodied labourer; poor-houses were also cleared as far as practicable of all persons either fit for work or better suited for the village relief list; while, on the other hand, kitchens and village relief were everywhere extended. The contrast between the proportions borne by the numbers on the several kinds of relief to the total relieved on the 31st May and the 15th October respectively is very marked, and indicates clearly how the activity of relief operations had shifted from localities to which the distressed had to come from their homes to the homes of the distressed :—

	31st May percentage to total relieved.	15th October percentage to total relieved.
On Public Works Department Relief-works ...	60·05	30·54
Dependents	12·55	4·73
On relief-works under Civil Officers ...	9·26	1·18
In poor-houses	3·65	2·91
Total relieved at a distance from their homes ...	85·51	39·36
Kitchens	1·65	8·93
Village relief	12·81	51·69
Total relieved at or in the vicinity of their homes.	14·46	60·62
Percentage of total population on relief ...	6·41	5·39
Percentage of total relieved on gratuitous relief ...	30·68	68·78

The winding up of relief measures.

79. The next stage in the famine operations was that of winding up, and during September and October the arrangements for bringing relief to a close were settled for each Division.

The main principles adopted were as stated below, but the precise period at which each step was taken varied according to local circumstances :—

(1) The closing of works was to be gradual, those being closed first in which numbers had been steady for some time or had begun to decline spontaneously. Each work was to be closed under the personal direction of a superior officer.

(2) Any sick in hospital were to be conveyed to the nearest poor-house.

(3) The task-workers were to be inspected, the weak and infirm being sent to their homes and brought on the village relief list, being at once paid the allowance due under the rules. If strangers, they were to be sent to the poor-houses for deportation.

(4) The remainder of the task-workers and all the piece-workers were to be given three days' pay and discharged from the works, unless another work was open within ten miles, in which case they were to be sent to it with one day's pay.

(5) The kitchen was to be maintained, if necessary, for a time as a civil agency kitchen in the nearest convenient village.

It was hoped that most of the works would be closed in the course of October, or in November where the harvests were later. No attempt was to be made, however, to curtail village relief lists until November, and kitchens were not to be closed in distressed localities until December. No new admissions to poor-houses, except those in obvious necessity, were to be made after the middle of October; and by drafting to village relief it was believed that by the close of October none but strangers, sick persons and orphans would be left in the poor-houses.

MAP
of the
CENTRAL PROVINCES
1898
Scale 1 Inch = 48 Miles.
50 40 30 20 10 0 50 100 Miles
To illustrate percentage of population relieved.
No. I indicates below 4 per cent of population relieved.
" II " Do. above 4 do. do. do.
" III " Do. do. 8 do. do. do.
" IV. " Do. do. 12 do. do. do.
" V " Do. do. 16 do. do. do.
NOTE.—Feudatories are left uncoloured.
Province Boundary
Native State "
District "
7°6
7°8
8°0
8°2
8°4
24°
22°
20°
18°
LALITPUR
SAUGOR
BHOPAL
SOHAGPUR
MANDLA
BILASPUR
CHHINDWARA
SEONI
BETUL
KHANDWA
ELLICHPUR
AMRAOTI
AKOLA
BULDANA
NAGPUR
WARDHA
CHANDA
BALAGHAT
BHANDARA
RAIPUR
DRUG
KANKER
BASTAR
JAGDALPUR
SAMBALPUR
PATNA
KALAHANDI
SIRONCHA
BASIM
WUN
Photo. S. I. O., Calcutta.

Strangers were to be deported, and orphans made over to responsible persons as soon as practicable, the remaining sick after the close of December being handed over to the ordinary hospitals and supported at the expense of local funds.

Gradual diminution of numbers.

80. Such was the general procedure enjoined, with such local modifications as the necessities of the case might warrant. The manner in which these orders were given effect to may be gathered from the following figures:—

Date.	Relief-works.	Dependents.	Works under Civil Officers.	Poor-houses.	Relief Centres and Kitchens.	Village relief.	Total.
15th October as stated above.	177,614	27,524	6,888	16,938	51,986	300,701	581,651
31st October ...	85,376	12,690	1,761	11,477	41,378	245,167	397,849
15th November ...	31,886	2,161	553	8,871	33,953	169,549	247,357
30th ,, ...	8,977	973	...	6,606	23,190	111,686	151,446
15th December ...	2,538	149	...	4,790	10,372	39,016	47,865
31st ,, ...	...	...	...	2,247	2,081	1,735	6,063

After the close of the year 1897, some slight work relief continued for a week or ten days in the districts of Balaghat and Bilaspur. But by the end of January the numbers on relief were confined to 770 in poor-houses and orphanages, of whom 462 were orphan children awaiting disposal, and the rest were sick persons, chiefly lepers, the remnants of prior relief. They were thus distributed:—

Bhandara	...	...	142
Balaghat	...	...	143
Raipur	...	...	230
Bilaspur	...	...	255
			770

The number undisposed of on the 1st March consisted of 125 sick in poor-houses, and 93 children in orphanages.

Details of heads to be separately discussed.

81. The above is a general sketch of the conduct of relief operations in the Province, their inception, development, progress, and gradual contraction. It remains, however, to deal in more detail with the several kinds of relief administered, and the differences in their operation which distinguish the various districts.

These will be dealt with under the following headings:—

A.—Relief-works.

(1) Public Works Department.
(2) Local works.
(3) Loan works.
(4) Weavers and other special kinds of relief.
(5) Fixation of wages.
(6) Money value and utility of work done.
(7) Railways and private employers.

B.—Gratuitous relief.

(1) Dependents on works.
(2) Poor-houses.
(3) Village relief.
(4) Relief-centres and kitchens.

A.—RELIEF-WORKS.

(1). *Works under the Public Works Department.*

Opening of relief-works and arrangements for management.

82. In the early stages of the famine, a certain number of road works were started by Deputy Commissioners, chiefly at the cost of district funds, both as a test of distress and as a measure of relief while arrangements were being organized. With no previous experience of the management of such works, and with hurriedly organized staff and establishment, a short supply of tools and other deficiencies which are inseparable from the early stages of works of this kind, it was at first found impossible to exact anything like a fair task from the large number of labourers who crowded some of the earlier opened works. It was therefore, as already mentioned, before long determined to hand over the complete professional conduct of these works to the officers of the Public Works Department.

The works were divided into charges, each of which, as originally contemplated, was to employ from 2,000 to 6,000 persons. The "Officer-in-charge," following the experience gained in the North-Western Provinces in 1896, was to be a civil officer of the Naib-Tahsildar class placed at the disposal of the Public Works Department, who was to be the cashier and general supervisor, to give out work with the assistance of a Sub-Overseer or "Work Agent," to classify workers, keep the cash-book, and be responsible for sanitation, water-supply and the ordering of the camp. The Work Agent laid out the work in advance, measured up each gang's work done, kept up the ordinary departmental record of measurements, and assessed fines for short work. The Officer-in-charge was assisted by a sub-cashier, a tools-clerk and an accounts clerk, and a disbursing clerk, called a "Gang-muharrir," who made payments under the direction and responsibility of the Officer-in-charge. To each gang, consisting of about 90 persons, of whom 20 (in earth-work charges) were diggers, there was a mate; and about 10 of such gangs formed the charge of a gang-muharrir. A Hospital Assistant was put in charge of hospital and kitchen arrangements.

The supervision over these "charges" rested with the Sub-Divisional Officer (Public Works Department); of these officers there was at the beginning of the famine at least one to each district; and as charges were multiplied to meet the demand for relief, fresh sub-divisions were created. Over the Sub-Divisional Officer was the Executive Engineer, who held charge of several districts. At the beginning of the famine there were six Executive Engineers, of whom three held charge of four districts each, and two of three districts each, while the sixth was in charge of Public Works in the Chhattisgarh Feudatories and certain large Zamindari estates managed by the Court of Wards. As the famine progressed it became necessary to split up these large charges and reduce the area for which each Executive Engineer was responsible.

For inspection of the works the Deputy Commissioner and his subordinates were available, though orders could only be given by the former. And it was arranged that in all such matters as fixing the task, modifying the scale of wages with reference to prices, the classification of labourers as to fitness for labour, &c., the Deputy Commissioner should invariably have a predominant voice.

Difficulties of organization.

83. Great difficulties were experienced in obtaining the necessary supply of work agents and other subordinate staff. Neighbouring Provinces could give no help, being themselves affected with famine, and recourse was had to advertisement in the public press. Many of the agents employed were students from engineering colleges with little or no practical experience, and many who were obtained from the North-Western Provinces or the Punjab deserted as soon as they found themselves posted to large camps with cholera breaking out, and all the discomforts of the hot weather to be faced. The successful administration of a camp depended upon the personal qualities of the officer-in-charge, the tact and resourcefulness of the Sub-Divisional Officer, and the amount of inspection carried out by the superior officers. The whole of the burden of organizing relief camps, and collecting at a moment's notice the necessary staff and tools, thus necessarily fell upon the

officers of the Public Works Department, to whom the greatest credit is due for the manner in which they surmounted the formidable difficulties which from time to time occurred.

The problems to be faced were manifold. On the one hand, with the light tasks exacted there was the danger of attracting to the works people who had resources in their own villages, but who were glad to earn a little money on the works as an addition to their income. On the other hand, in other localities, and especially where aboriginal populations were concerned, an extraordinary timidity prevailed, and the least severity in the matter of tasks sufficed to drive away persons of this class who were really in need of relief and deter others from coming.

84. The system prescribed in the Provincial Famine Code is one purely of task work, and the task and wages are allotted according to a scale based on the assumed capacity of the workers (Article 52).

Relief-workers are thus classified :—

A.—Able-bodied persons accustomed to labour of the kind required on ordinary works ;

B.—Able-bodied persons accustomed to labour, but not to labour of the kind required on ordinary works ;

C.—Able-bodied persons not accustomed to labour ;

D.—Persons not able-bodied, but fit for light employment on relief-works.

Following the example (based on the experience gained in Bundelkhand in 1896) of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh Government, it was determined in December 1896 to simplify this elaborate classification, and to reduce the number of classes to two, those lettered above as *B* and *D*, the *A* class being reserved for mates and special gangs employed on work for which a higher wage is necessary to secure its proper performance. Even this simplification involved the separation of the two classes retained into men, women and children. In addition to these were the dependents—infirm adults and children of different ages. For the workers tasks had to be fixed by the Executive Engineer in consultation with the District Officer (the Famine Code giving assistance by tables of standard tasks suited to different descriptions of work) ; and for a task duly performed the prescribed wages could be earned. If the task was not duly done, fining could, under the Code, be resorted to ; but except in cases of contumacy the wage was never to fall below the minimum. The wages of the Code are calculated in terms of the staple grain, and it is laid down that for *B* workers the wages of an adult male shall be the price of 19 chittacks (38 ounces) of grain, and of an adult female the price of 17 chittacks (34 ounces). Similarly the *D* or minimum wage is for an adult male the price of 14 chittacks (28 ounces) and for a female 13 chittacks (26 ounces) : for children the rate varies, according to age, between three-fourths and one-fourth of the wage for adult males.

Converting the quantities specified into money, the following would be the minimum daily wage of adult males and females respectively at the prices stated below :—

Rate.	D Wage.	
	Adult male.	Adult female.
	A. P.	A. P.
7 Seers per rupee	1 9	1 7
8 Seers per rupee	1 7	1 5
9 Seers per rupee	1 5	1 4
10 Seers per rupee	1 3	1 2

For convenience of payment (pies not being in use) the rates actually paid were calculated to the nearest pice (=3 pies). Thus the actual wages paid would be, in the first column above, 0-1-9, 0-1-6, 0-1-6, 0-1-3 ; and in the second column 0-1-6, 0-1-6, 0-1-3, 0-1-3.

Difficulty of exacting a full task.

85. Most of the workers, especially when they comprised families of three or four persons and one or two children, were quite satisfied with the D wage, and indeed were even able to save money. Consequently it was found extremely difficult to exact a fair task from the able-bodied, and those who were unaccustomed to hard manual labour did not even attempt to render a full task. The case of idlers of this kind could only be met by fines, and a system of fining could only be worked in practice by thoroughly trustworthy subordinates, of whom none too many were available. Here and there some sub-divisional officers succeeded in working a system of fines without causing undue hardship, but these were quite the exception, and throughout fining was very sparingly resorted to.

The piece-work system.

86. It was therefore found necessary to devise a system by which able-bodied labourers could be offered inducements to do a fair day's work, and the result of deliberation on this subject was the introduction of the piece-work system. This system, as well as the payment-by-results system which followed it, have already been glanced at in the general sketch of relief measures with which this Chapter began, but a somewhat more detailed account of the system is required under this description of the relief works under the Public Works Department.

The piece-work system as first introduced in the Province was the same as that introduced in the North-Western Provinces, and known there as the "intermediate" system. It was suggested to the Government of India in February 1897 that, in view of the extreme difficulty of enforcing an adequate task, and of providing the necessary establishment for supervision, the introduction of such a system was advisable as a general measure in parts of the Province not acutely distressed, and also, as an optional measure, in parts where distress was acute, but the proportion of able-bodied labourers justified its adoption. Its introduction on these terms was approved by the Government of India, and in March Commissioners were addressed regarding the advisability of introducing the system. It was impressed upon them that the criterion to be applied in judging whether the system could be safely applied was whether considerable numbers of labourers seeking employment were inefficient or not.

The main points of the system as first laid down were that :—

(i) The work was to be entrusted to gangers or village headmen.

(ii) A fixed proportion of the rates was to be paid to the workers.

(iii) The 'ganger' was to supply all minor establishment and perishable stores, and to receive a fixed proportion of the rates paid as a remuneration.

(iv) The size of the gangs was to be limited to 200, and the outturn of work per gang to the value of Rs. 1,000 per mensem.

Development of the system.

87. In the course of May the Commissioner of Jubbulpore, the late Mr. Priest, introduced the system in parts of the Jubbulpore, Mandla and Seoni districts, but except in the last district contractors were not employed. The step was taken in view of the excellent condition in which Mr. Priest after personal inspection found the majority of the workers on the works in those districts. But, except in these districts, little progress in this direction was accomplished until, in May, a general order was issued in the Public Works Department, giving further instructions for the introduction of the piece-work system, and all officers were directed to take prompt measures to put these into effect.

The main points insisted on were :—

(i) The system was to be introduced gradually, no sudden changes being effected.

(ii) The rates were to be sufficient to enable an able-bodied labourer to support his dependents.

(iii) If infirm gangs were found necessary they were to be drafted to the nearest task-work charge, and task-work charges were to be arranged if possible alternately with piece-work.

(iv) The rates might be fixed at a certain percentage above the ordinary rates, but they must vary with the price of grain; at the same time they were not to be such as to attract labour for which employment existed elsewhere.

(v) The employment of large and reliable contractors was suggested, who would undertake to arrange for all establishment and payments, and would be paid for work done on a regular schedule of rates.

(vi) On charges still retained on ordinary task-work, piece-work might gradually be substituted for the task.

These instructions were supplemented a few days later by the following additions—

(*a*) Infirm gangs might be permitted to work on the task-work system side by side with the piece-workers if there was no task-work charge within reasonable distance.

(*b*) For the conversion of a task-work charge to piece-work the inefficient labour should not be more than 25 per cent.

(*c*) The separation of labourers into those able to live by piece-work and those not so able was to be made by the Sub-Divisional Officer in person, acting on the advice and with the co-operation of a Medical Officer, at the introduction of piece-work for the first time.

Extension of the system into the various districts.

88. Early in June Mr. E. Penny, the Superintendent of Works in the Southern Districts, drew up rules to give effect to these orders and the safeguards which they required, and under these rules the system was put into effect in the districts of Nagpur, Wardha, Bhandara, Balaghat (to a very limited extent), Raipur, Bilaspur (on some of the works) and Sambalpur. In these districts the ordinary Public Works Department contractors were for the most part (though not everywhere) employed and found extremely useful, accustomed as they were to the management of work people. The best work was turned out under this system, but it was more expensive than under the task-work system, as there was practically very little saving of establishment. In all these districts every piece-work charge had a task-work section attached, besides a kitchen either upon the work or in the immediate neighbourhood. The first introduction of the system, in this part of the Province as elsewhere, was followed by a reduction of numbers, persons accustomed to idle resenting the requirement of work as a condition of payment; but confidence became restored when the workers found that payments were made regularly, and that they could earn a larger wage by more work under the ordinary piece-work system.

In the northern districts there was less activity shown in pushing the system. In Damoh it was never introduced; in Saugor it was withdrawn at the end of June after having been tried in three out of twelve charges. In Jubbulpore it was extended somewhat; in Seoni it was applied to all charges, and in Mandla to four out of five. Only in Seoni were contractors employed, the piece-work in other districts being managed direct by the officer-in-charge and his assistants. In the Nerbudda Division, Chhindwara, like Damoh, did not adopt it: in Narsinghpur and Hoshangabad it was applied to a proportion of the charges, and to two works in Betul and the single work in Nimar. Contractors were not employed in all cases, the piece-work being managed, as in Jubbulpore, direct. In the statements annexed to the Chief Engineer's report on famine relief-works will be found, for each district and for each work, a statement of the time during which piece-work continued upon it. In Mandla the system was in July withdrawn, as mentioned below.

89. Early in August, when the early kharif grains were about to be reaped, and labour was wanted in the fields, a memorandum by the Chief Commissioner directing the introduction of a system of payment-by-results, based on the "Modified Intermediate System" of the North-Western Provinces, was circulated for compliance. The main objects of this system were (1) to expedite the return to their villages of the able-bodied labourer able to find employment there who were tempted to remain on the works by the larger earnings they could make as piece-workers; and (2) to prevent the large balance of inefficient or weakly workers from being injudiciously drafted on to piece-work when unfit for it. The main points of the new system were as follows:—

The payment-by-results system.

(i) Every work was to have a task-work annexed;

(ii) The principle to be enforced was that able-bodied labour was not to be paid except by results, whilst inefficient labour must be paid enough to enable it to subsist;

(iii) No contractors were to be employed, and the piece-work was to be carried out under the supervision of the officer-in-charge and the Government establishment;

(iv) Wages for the piece-worker were to be so pitched as not to exceed the D class or lowest wage. Labourers were not to be allowed to earn more than this, and for short tasks they would only be paid for work actually done;

(v) Dependents of piece-workers were to be treated in the same manner as dependents of task workers, food at the kitchens being given to them in preference to a money dole.

It was directed that these rules were not to be brought into force on any work without the consent of the Commissioner, and where charges had already been organized on the previous piece-work rules and were working well, no change need be made. And in orders issued later on great caution was enjoined in introducing the new system.

90. Owing to the unavoidable delay in communicating orders to departmental subordinates and to other reasons, this system of payment-by-results did not come largely into force till almost the close of the famine. It was introduced in August in the Jubbulpore Division, except in Mandla, and worked well, accomplishing its object in sending off to the fields considerable numbers of able-bodied persons who were not in much need of assistance. In the Nerbudda Division the new rules were introduced in Hoshangabad in the end of September, partially in Narsinghpur, and at the one camp in Nimar; but they were not applied at all in Chhindwara, and only to two out of six charges in Betul. In the south of the Province the system was enforced in Wardha and Nagpur about the middle of September, and in Bhandara and partially in Balaghat at the end of that month. It was owing to a mistake introduced on a few works in Bilaspur for about ten days, but immediately withdrawn when it was found that workers were leaving in numbers. In Raipur the rules were in force only on one work, the Raipur-Dhamtari tramway, for a short time, conjointly with the task-work system.

Localities where the system was introduced.

For further information regarding piece-work reference is invited to the departmental report on Famine Relief Works. Generally it may be said that the piece-work system, especially when worked direct by the officer-in-charge, gave satisfactory results. The payment-by-results system was devised with a special object at a special stage of the famine, and it also accomplished its intention of clearing the works of persons not in need of relief, whose labour was wanted in the fields.

This section of the Report requires to complete it (besides the departmental report already referred to) only a few remarks on the special features exhibited by works in different tracts of the Province.

JUBBULPORE DIVISION.

Jubbulpore Division

91. Distress was more intense in this Division than elsewhere during the early part of the famine, and the relief measures carried on through the hot weather and rains of 1896 continued throughout September, October and November; regular works were opened in December in all the districts of the Division except Seoni, and early in January in that district. The number of charges was expanded as the season advanced, and was at its highest during the rains, when local works under Civil Officers had to be contracted. The works were kept open generally until the end of October, the last works to be closed being seven in Jubbulpore and Saugor which continued till the middle of November. The following statement shows the salient features of this form of relief in the districts of the Division :—

District.	Maximum number of charges open at one time.	Maximum number who came on works including dependents.	Date on which maximum was reached.	Percentage of total population.
Saugor	13	* 33,422	15th March ...	5·6
Damoh	10	* 41,302	15th July ...	12·7
Jubbulpore	18	* 50,807	15th May ...	6·8
Mandla	6	23,596	15th April ...	6·9
Seoni	5	12,489	31st May ..	3·4

* *N. B.*—These figures include dependents on Civil Works also.

In Damoh alone the largest numbers were reached in the rains, when Public Works Department works were increased in number to meet the need caused by the closure of civil works. The introduction of the payment-by-results system rapidly cleared the works in August of able-bodied persons who could find employment in their villages.

Jubbulpore District.

In Jubbulpore piece-work was not generally introduced till June, and workers were restricted to a D wage in August. In September, when orders were passed that all new-comers should be put on to task-work until they could be examined by a superior officer, it was found that villagers in the neighbourhood of a work crowded on to it in order to earn a small sum for the few days until they could be inspected. Directly they were drafted on to piece-work they left again. On one work numbers rose from 300 to 1,200 in this way for a few days, the extra workers leaving again directly the inspecting officers came round.

Mandla.

In Mandla work on roads was never popular. On this subject the Commissioner remarks :—

> The problems offered by famine-relief in this district were much more difficult than those confronted elsewhere. There are open villages the population of which does not differ much from that of the Jubbulpore District. But the greater part of the district is upland, peopled by hill-tribes averse to regular work, and characterized by a timidity which made the associations of large relief camps very distasteful. Had Government adhered to the ordinary principle under which it is quit of its responsibilities when it has placed remunerative work within reach of the distressed, relief would have been curtailed within narrow limits. The people would accept relief only when brought to them at their homes in the form of village works, house-to-house relief or kitchens. But to an organization of this description the natural features of the country offered almost insuperable obstacles.

There were six Public Works Department charges in all, and shortly before the rains piece-work was introduced on five of them and the sixth was closed. The Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Medical Officer were disposed to attribute

to the piece-work rules the reluctance of the people to resort to the works during the monsoon, and in consequence of their advice the piece-work system was withdrawn. Mr. Fuller, however, is not of that opinion; he writes:—

Special gangs were from the first opened for the infirm, and though at the outset some hardship may have resulted from the misapprehension of orders, by the middle of July work on Code rules was open to all who were unfit for piece-work, and there was no reason why numbers should not have risen as they rose in Jubbulpore. Moreover, during August piece-work was stopped altogether, but without any result in attracting coolies. It seems clear that the people preferred any alternative to coming to the works during the rains, save in places where villages were numerous in their vicinity, and there was no hardship in coming from home and returning each day.

The figures for Mandla relief-works (including dependents) during the rains fully bear out the Commissioner's remarks:—

Date.	Nos.
April 15th	23,596
„ 30th	23,008
May 15th	22,816
„ 31st	24,279
June 15th	21,546
„ 30th	9,726
July 15th	8,419
„ 31st	10,932
August 15th	10,975
„ 31st	10,795
September 15th	8,966
„ 30th	6,172
October 15th	2,792
„ 31st	429

Seoni.

Of Seoni, the Deputy Commissioner remarks that the numbers on relief-works were governed more by climatic conditions than by the intensity of distress, and he adds that the expansion of village relief during the rains had the effect of reducing the number of workers. As a considerable portion of the Seoni District where the spring crops yielded well was not severely distressed, the numbers never reached the proportion of population relieved in other districts of the Division.

Nerbudda Division.

92. In this Division the dates * on which regular relief-works under the Code were first opened were as under:—

Narsinghpur	30th November 1896.
Hoshangabad	27th „ „
Nimar	8th December „
Betul	9th „ „
Chhindwara	16th „ „

Nerbudda Division.

By the middle of December fourteen road works were open in the Division, and the number of charges ultimately rose to forty-five. Distress was severe in Narsinghpur, Hoshangabad and Betul, and in some parts of Chhindwara, *viz.*, the Jagirs in the north, and part of the hilly area in the north-east and west of the district. In Nimar it was never

* It has already been mentioned (*vide* paragraph 67) that *test-works* were started much earlier in most of these districts.

at all intense. The number of charges, and the maximum number reached in the various districts are shown in tabular form :—

District.	Maximum number of charges.	Maximum numbers, including dependents.	Date at which maximum reached.	Proportion to total population.
Narsinghpur	10	54 511	15th June.	14·8
Hoshangabad	19	62,252	15th May.	12·5
Nimar	1	1,486	30th Septr.	0·5
Betul	9	18,670	31st May.	5·8
Chhindwara	6	16,558	31st July.	4·0

Narsinghpur and Hoshangabad were the two districts in the Province where the people showed themselves most ready to resort to relief-work on roads ; and during the hot weather 70 to 90 per cent. of those on relief in these districts were so relieved. In Nimar, two test works opened in December 1896 were closed in February, as they failed to attract workers, but another work was started in the vicinity of Khandwa on which people from the poor-house could be drafted. A considerable number of Korkus from the hill tracts were brought in to work on this road, and they, with drafts from the poor-house and strangers and wanderers, constituted the majority of the workers. In Betul the aborigines, as elsewhere, did not take very kindly to the work, and, as in Mandla, there was a great falling off in the rains. In Chhindwara only about a third of the population were severely distressed, and the proportion of total population on works was therefore small ; but as the population of the Jagirs were severely distressed, no attempt was made to thin the workers by the introduction of piece-work, and the numbers in this district did not fall much until September, by which time the reaping of maize and the early millets had considerably relieved the situation.

The effect of the rains, and of the measures taken to induce the able-bodied to return to their villages for agricultural operations, may be judged from the following figures :—

Period.	Numbers on relief works, including dependents.				
	Narsingh-pur.	Hoshanga-bad	Nimar.	Betul.	Chhindwara.
Close of hot weather	48 797	54,865	144	18 670	13,642
End of June	24,062	24,762	87	6,629	13 540
End of July	22,828	40,679	793	10,048	16,558
September 15th	15,171	32 403	1,319	8 936	9,741
October 31st	1,393	1,646	...	6,977	4,545

Nagpur Division.

93. In this Division Wardha and Chanda were not severely distressed, and in Nagpur the areas of failure were limited. In Bhandara, except in the southern portion of the district, distress was severe, and in Balaghat very acute. Of Wardha there is little to remark. A test work opened in December 1896 and continued during January 1897 failed to attract any considerable numbers. But in May, to meet an increase in distress in the northern portion of the district, road work was opened, and between 2,000 and 3,000 workers on an average were employed. Piece-work conjointly with task-work was resorted to almost from the beginning. The number of workers dropped with the advent of the rains, and when under the payment-by-results system their earnings were limited to the D wage, a speedy decline took place. There were no indications of acute distress in the neighbourhood.

Wardha.

Nagpur.

In Nagpur there were in all eleven charges open, of which four were purely piece-work, and on seven task and piece-work were conjointly in force. The demand for employment in this district was high during the rains, and the introduction of piece-work did not drive away the workers to any appreciable extent.

The numbers including dependents were as follows :—

May 31st	...	...	...	17,563
June 30th	...	...	...	14,779
July 31st	...	...	...	16,628
August 31st	...	...	...	15,203
September 30th	...	...	...	13,110
October 31st	...	...	...	5,015
November 30th	...	...	...	2,774

The works were then closed.

Five of the eleven charges (including all those purely on piece-work) were in the neighbourhood of Nagpur, and in the early months of the famine the majority of the workers were immigrants from Balaghat and Bhandara. Local distress did not develop much until after the *mahua* had been gathered.

Chanda.

In Chanda the area of failure was confined to the zamindaris in the east, and the construction of a road connecting one of these with the railway in the Nandgaon State was started in January ; of the numbers, which never exceeded 2,700, a large proportion came from the Feudatory States, and by the end of March the work had progressed across the Chanda border. Such distress as existed within the district was amply met by local works and loan works, in the organization of which the Deputy Commissioner displayed much activity.

In Bhandara nine Public Works Department charges were organised. These were started—

In November	...	...	...	2
In December	...	...	...	2
In January	...	...	...	1
In February	...	...	...	1
In May	...	...	...	3

and continued till October or November.

Bhandara.

During the early months of the hot weather loan and private works kept a number of persons employed ; but after the close of the *mahua* season distress increased, and with the cessation of private works on the breaking of the rains there was a large increase in the numbers, which continued high until the rains were established and transplanting of rice offered increased employment in the villages. The piece-work system here attracted rather than repelled labourers after they became accustomed to it, and the Deputy Commissioner speaks very favourably of the good effect of the payment-by-results system introduced later on in compelling "idle loafers" not in real need to work in their villages.

The progress and fluctuations of the numbers employed in this district are shown by the following figures :—

Date.	Numbers, including dependents.	Percentage of total population.
December 31st	9,072	1·2
February 15th	13,677	1·8
April 15th	11,202	1·5
May 31st	37,351	5·0
June 30th	19,615	2·6
July 31st	26,073	3·5
September 15th	20,680	2·8
October 31st	6 841	0·9

During the early months the numbers on relief-works constituted 80 to 90 per cent. of the total relieved, the proportion gradually falling to 75 per cent. in the middle of the hot weather, to 65 per cent. on the beginning of the rains, and to 55 per cent. in the later months.

Balaghat.

In Balaghat work was opened in November, but it was not until January that the numbers mounted much. The greatest distress was in the Baihar Tahsil, where the population is chiefly aboriginal. There were eleven road charges and eleven tank works (the latter all in the Baihar Tahsil) under the Public Works Department, another tank work being managed by the Revd. Mr. Lampard, and the progress in numbers is shown in the statement below:—

Date.	Numbers, including dependents.
January 31st	... 4,975
February 28th	... 16,664
April 15th	... 35,141
May 15th	.. 58,323
June 15th	... 52,127
June 30th	... 30,842
July 15th	... 48,083
August 31st	... 32,122
September 15th	... 39,265
October 31st	... 11,204
December 15th	... 2,641

The works were then closed. The maximum numbers reached 15·2 per cent. of the total population (May 15th), and in the rains about 10 per cent. were on the works. The great majority of the people were on task-work throughout.

Chhattisgarh Division.

Sambalpur.

94. In Chhattisgarh the autumn harvest, even when very deficient, represents a larger proportion of the year's food-supply than is the case in every other part of the Province except Balaghat. Consequently distress did not develop as early as elsewhere, but, when it once began to increase, it grew very rapidly. The history of the famine in Chhattisgarh is confined to the districts of Raipur and Bilaspur. In Sambalpur, with a very fair rice crop, large exports and high prices, money poured into the district, and private charity amply sufficed to support the poor whom the high prices affected. A single road work was opened in April and continued till October, but this was chiefly intended to meet the needs of a corner of the district where the local crops had been poor, and immigrants from Bilaspur were numerous. The numbers on this work only reached 2,200, and rapidly fell as the rains advanced.

As regards Raipur and Bilaspur, the following figures show when the pressure was most intense:—

Date.	Raipur.	Bilaspur.
	Numbers, including dependents.	Numbers, including dependents.
15th February	13 891	8,708
31st March	53 730	15,486
15th April	69 137	20,321
30th April	96,783	24,746
15th May	88,393	32,588
15th June	73,519	34,484
15th July	47,236	39,843
15th August	43 564	49,211
30th September	41,791	46,645
31st October	26,273	25,784

Comparison of Raipur and Bilaspur.

It thus appears that in Bilaspur distress began to increase rapidly just at the time when it began to abate in Raipur. The maximum in Raipur (April 30th) reached 6 per cent. of the population; the maximum in Bilaspur (August 15th) reached barely 5 per cent. The apparently slower progress of distress in Bilaspur during the hot weather, as contrasted with the rushes of labourers who came upon the works in Raipur during April and May, undoubtedly deceived the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, both of whom were unfortunately new to their charges, as to the comparative urgency of the need in the two districts. The demands for provision of work in Raipur severely taxed the resources of the Public Works Department, and when the magnitude of the distress in Bilaspur was suddenly brought home to them, their urgent request for the opening of fresh charges in the rains in that district could not immediately be complied with, although every effort was made by the Department to meet the necessities of the case.

In Raipur no less than twenty charges were opened between December and May. In Bilaspur by the end of April there were only six charges, and in the following months additional charges were opened as follows:—

May	...	...	...	... 2
June	...	...	...	... 2
July	...	...	...	... 3
August	...	...	...	... 2

By the end of August the requirements had been met, and 15 charges in all were open. The delay was extremely unfortunate, but in the circumstances it was excusable. The resources of the Provincial staff were strained to the utmost, and it was absolutely impossible to find men at once to take charge of the new works applied for.

For information as to the amount expended on relief-works under Public Works Department, the outturn and value of the work obtained, the comparative cost of famine and ordinary labour, and the amount of relief afforded, reference should be made to the departmental report by the Chief Engineer and its annexures, where the subject will be found treated in detail.

(2). *Local Works under Civil Officers.*

General remarks regarding local works.

95. With the resolution arrived at on the 9th December 1896 to entrust the general conduct of relief-works to the Public Works Department, the majority of the works which had up to the end of that month been started passed, by January 1897, out of the hands of Civil Officers. In most districts, however, there remained certain works under their control, and this was especially the case in the Jubbulpore Division. Such works were for the most part earthwork on tanks, or the filling up and levelling of insanitary hollows in district or sub-divisional head-quarter stations, carried on to afford employment to weakly persons in Municipalities, or to convalescents discharged from poor-houses. Owing to the character of the labour employed on most of such works the exaction of full tasks was difficult; and the value of the work done cannot generally be put very high. The work was frequently of a somewhat desultory kind, and the District Officers, unaccustomed to the detailed accounts required in the Public Works Department, have not been able to supply the data for such a full statement of its value and extent as has been obtained for those works which have been carried out under professional supervision. There was not, however, an entire absence of rules or method: in January 1897 Mr. L. K. Laurie, the Commissioner of the Nerbudda Division, drew up a simple set of instructions for the regulation of such works, based on the Public Works Department rules of the 26th December, which were circulated and proved very useful.

The highest numbers employed on such works reached 68,202, in the first half of May; of these 48,802 were in the Jubbulpore Division, and over 12,000 in Chhattisgarh; only 6,786 were in the Nerbudda Division, and in the Nagpur Division the number never reached 1,000. Most of the works consisting of earthwork on tanks, they were necessarily much restricted on the setting-in of the rains, and after the end of June never gave employment to so many as 20,000 persons.

JUBBULPORE DIVISION.

96. The largest numbers at any time employed under Civil Officers in the several districts of this Division after relief-works were transferred to the Public Works Department were as follows :—

District.	Maximum numbers.	Date.	Percentage of total relieved.
Saugor	14,470	15th May	27
Damoh	15,384	31st May	29
Jubbulpore	21,928	31st January	24
Mandla	2,371	15th June	8
Seoni	3,044	31st January	37

Saugor.

In Saugor six tanks and one road were undertaken during the hot weather; these were closed in the rains, a few persons only being retained to finish off the tanks. The works were of a useful character, and have been successfully carried out.

Damoh.

In Damoh seven tank construction charges were started in December 1896 and January 1897, and continued until the rains set in. These works, during the hot weather, employed as many persons as the roads under the Public Works Department, and were, it is reported, very satisfactorily managed. The workers were divided into small gangs and paid daily, copper coin being supplied by a local contractor, who was allowed a drawback of 6 pies in the rupee, and was liable to a penalty of Rs. 50 for any day on which his supply ran short. When these works were closed, six Public Works Department charges took their place.

Jubbulpore.

In Jubbulpore local works were first opened in connection with the Relief Centres already mentioned (paragraph 70), to provide for the persons coming there who were fit for light work; they were also started to provide for outlying tracts which the Public Works Department works did not fully reach; and in Jubbulpore city much work was done by the Municipality with funds provided by Government on various local improvements. The other works were under the Circle Relief Officers, and chiefly consisted of repairs to tanks. During the hot weather the numbers averaged about 15,000. On the advent of the rains most of the works were closed, but with the drought that followed some were re-opened, and the numbers which had dropped to 5,000 rose again to 10,000. During the rains some short lengths of road, chiefly in the Murwara Tahsil, were carried on under this system. They were finally closed in October. Some of the works were well executed, but an efficient supervising agency could not always be secured.

Mandla.

In Mandla also the local works were almost entirely in connection with Relief Centres. Seventeen of these were established with small works attached: in the open season these consisted of tanks; in the rains the centres were shifted elsewhere, and the labour employed on the improvement of *ghâts* or mountain passes on the rough roads which traverse the district. Besides these there was a local work at the district head-quarters.

Seoni.

In Seoni the system of local works was somewhat different. Embankment of land was undertaken in twenty different ryotwari villages, and the people employed were mostly of the immediate locality. The numbers were never very large, and the people were paid every three to seven days when the Circle Officers came round. The works were supervised by the village *Patel* or head-man, and were very cheaply done. Besides these field embankment, some tanks were constructed, as in Jubbulpore, at relief centres, and two forest roads were also undertaken. The works came to an end in the rains.

NERBUDDA DIVISION.

Few local works in the Nerbudda Division.

97. In this Division little was done in local works. A tank and a road in Chhindwara, a tank in Hoshangabad and in Nimar, and some forest roads in the same two districts,

complete the list. In Betul two roads were opened under Civil Agency before they were handed over to Public Works Department management, but there were no local works properly so-called; and in Narsinghpur all relief-work was confined to roads under the Public Works Department. The numbers employed were quite insignificant, reaching 4,000 in May in Hoshangabad, and 2,400 in Chhindwara. The numbers on the Nimar tank work never exceeded 204.

NAGPUR DIVISION.

Also in Nagpur Division.

98. In the Nagpur Division also the record of local works is quite trifling. Some Municipal road-work was undertaken in Nagpur, and a road was opened as a test work for a month in Wardha, during the early part of the famine. In Bhandara no work of this kind was carried out, and in Balaghat the amount done was insignificant.

In Chanda during the hot weather months the Deputy Commissioner organized some local tank works under the supervision of the Land Record staff, and at one time or another during this period twenty such works were carried out. The numbers employed never exceeded 500, but the works were of advantage to local labour in villages where the crops had partially failed.

CHHATTISGARH DIVISION.

System of local works in the Chhattisgarh Division.

99. In Raipur the work done under this head consisted for the most part of tank excavation. Twenty-one tanks were thus constructed or repaired. In the municipal area the work took the form of filling up insanitary swamps and hollows, tank repair and cleaning. Some well construction and the ditching of fuel and fodder reserves were also carried out under Civil Agency, and in the rains the Deputy Commissioner put a certain number of labourers on weeding the rice fields of tenants believed to be unable to afford the expense of getting the work done themselves. The minor works were carried out by malguzars, who received a commission on the estimated cost of the work done. The larger tank-works were carried out on the gang system, task-work being exacted according to the character of the work and the physical condition of the people; in one sub-division lists of weak workers were made out, and these were paid the minimum wage irrespective of the work done by them.

In Bilaspur there were thirteen local works, most of which were carried out through malguzars at the contract rates of the neighbourhood, and consisted of drinking-water tanks. One larger work was handed over to the Public Works Department, and one, the filling up of an insanitary tank, was managed by the Municipal Committee. These works were all started as distress increased in the early part of the hot weather, and continued throughout the rains.

The numbers to which these local works gave employment in the two districts were as follows :—

Date.	Raipur.	Bilaspur.
April 15th ...	5,185	412
May 31st ...	8,912	3,511
June 15th ...	7,999	1,664
August 15th ...	1,088	2,267
September 30th ...	2,018	1,823

In Raipur the numbers employed touched 8 per cent. of the total relieved, and in Bilaspur 6 per cent.

Summary of local works.

100. Of these local works generally it may be said that they were of considerable importance in the Jubbulpore Division, and were useful as subsidiary means of employment in

the other Divisions. They met to some extent the demand for employment near the people's homes. In the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh Districts they were quite over-shadowed, as will presently be seen, by the works carried out from famine loans and private funds; and in the Nerbudda Division (outside Betul) there was less difficulty than elsewhere experienced in inducing people to have recourse to the Public Works Department road works. Only in Chhattisgarh, and in one case in Nimar, was the conduct of local works entrusted to local land-holders, on the system adopted in Bundelkhand in 1896; more might have been done in this direction with advantage.

A brief review of these works carried out under the Civil Department, with details for each district, will be found among the appendices to this Report.

(3). *Loan Works.*

Conditions regarding famine loans.

101. Early in 1897 it was decided, in accordance with the orders of the Government of India, to discontinue all loans on ordinary terms under the Land Improvement Act, and to substitute for them special loans, usually termed famine loans, for local works of improvement. The general conditions of these loans as first determined were:—

(1) That none of the money should be spent except in tracts where direct Government relief-works would otherwise be required;

(2) That the money should be devoted solely to affording relief to those for whom it would otherwise be necessary for Government to provide relief in other ways;

(3) That it should be all brought to account, in the first instance, as famine expenditure.

They were to be granted free of interest, and in consideration of the borrower observing the conditions imposed as to the employment of distressed persons, the exaction of proper tasks, and the payment of Famine Code wages, a remission was to be allowed, the extent of which was to be estimated beforehand with reference to the degree of distress and the consequent inefficiency of famine labour in any given locality. The time for repayment was to vary with the nature of the work, the maximum period being seven years. In the event of loans being misapplied, the full amount was to be recoverable at once. Subsequently, on the 16th February, the system was extended to those parts of the Province where the existence of general and severe distress had not been formally recognized, but where relief was required, and the necessity of providing it at the cost of Government would be obviated by utilizing private agency by the means of loans. In these less urgent cases no remission of principal was thought necessary, though the advances were made free of interest. As already mentioned, the Administration had asked for ten lakhs of rupees for advances under the Land Improvement Loans Act in 1896-97, to be made chiefly in Chhattisgarh; but only five lakhs could be allotted to the whole Province for famine loans during the financial year 1896-97, and an additional grant was afterwards made of ten lakhs for the financial year 1897-98.

The normal rate of remission of principal approved was as follows:—

One-fourth.	One-fifth.	*Nil.*
Saugor.	Seoni.	Nagpur
Damoh.	Nerbudda Division.	Wardha.
Jubbulpore.	Bhandara. } Distressed areas.	Chanda.
Mandla.	Raipur. } Distressed areas.	Sambalpur.
Balaghat.	Bilaspur. } Distressed areas.	Bhandara. } Areas not severely distressed.
		Raipur. } Areas not severely distressed.
		Bilaspur. } Areas not severely distressed.

The information given as to the manner in which famine loans, and the sums previously given out under the Land Improvement Loans Act before famine loans were introduced, were utilized, varies considerably in the various districts, but the following is a general account of the use made of the system.

JUBBULPORE DIVISION.

102. The amounts given out in this Division as famine loans were :—

	Rs.
Saugor	37,680
Damoh	63,275
Jubbulpore	85,265
Mandla	13,440
Seoni	23,609

Extent of loan works in the Jubbulpore Division.

The works were at their fullest during April and May, but no record of the numbers employed is available. As, however, most of the money was expended on earthwork, tanks and embankments, and the period for which the work continued did not exceed three or four months, the sums expended must have given employment to large numbers of people. In Saugor 56 loans were granted, in Jubbulpore 484, and in Seoni 77. In the case of Jubbulpore out of the total advanced no less than Rs. 28,000 was distributed in small sums of under Rs. 250 among 422 recipients, chiefly for field embankments. The Deputy Commissioner of Damoh fears that part of his last advance of Rs. 10,000 may have been misapplied for the purchase of seed or bullocks. Some idea of the numbers employed may be gathered from the fact that in Jubbulpore, if only 75 per cent. of the sums advanced were utilized in wages, and the average duration of the work was three months, the loans would have sufficed for the disbursement in wages of Rs. 712 daily, or sufficient for the support of 8,000 people for the whole of that period.

NERBUDDA DIVISION.

103. The character of the country in this Division affords but little scope for small village works. One tank was constructed from a famine loan in a village under the management of the Court of Wards in the Hoshangabad District, and three tanks in the Chhindwara Jagirs, partly from the private funds of the jagirdars and partly from loans taken by them. In Narsinghpur a considerable sum was utilized in making field embankments. In Betul a few field embankments were made, and some wells sunk with the help of such loans. In Nimar no loans were applied for.

Limited scope for loan works in Nerbudda Division.

The sums advanced as famine loans in this Division were :—

	Rs.	A.	P.
Narsinghpur	25 339	0	0
Hoshangabad	19,677	8	0
Nimar	*Nil.*		
Betul	17,353	8	0
Chhindwara	29,928	0	0

No details are available of the number of persons employed on the works constructed from famine loans in Narsinghpur. In Hoshangabad Rs. 8,000 out of the total was devoted to the tank mentioned above, which was regularly managed according to the system prescribed for local works under the Deputy Commissioner; the balance was chiefly expended on field embankments and the eradication of *kans* grass. In Chhindwara Rs. 25,000 of the total grant was devoted to tanks in the Jagirs, and the balance utilized for embankments in another distressed portion of the district. The numbers employed were as follows :—

15th February	1,097
31st March	1,553
30th April	2,328
31st May	1,901
15th July	1,071

In Betul loan works sufficed for the employment of from 2,000 to 3,000 persons from January to September, and in August the numbers reached nearly 5,000.

Nagpur Division.

Great value of loan works in the Wainganga Districts.

104. In Wardha little use was made of loans, only four advances being given of an aggregate amount of Rs. 1,930. In Nagpur much good work was done with the aid of loans aggregating Rs. 25,474 in amount. In seventeen cases subsequent advances were withheld, as the first advances had not been properly used, and in a few cases the whole or part of the advance was recovered for failure to comply with the conditions laid down.

But it was in the rice districts of this Division that most use was made of loans for the purpose of affording employment, as the following figures show:—

District.	Amount Advanced.			Number of recipients.	Maximum numbers employed.
	Land Improvement Act.	Famine Loans.	Total.		
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.		
Chanda	50 000	99 235	1 49,235	313	35,758
Bhandara	15,758	2,09 963	2,25,721	804	15,725
Balaghat	50,784	1 33,320	1,84,104	1,297	17,000

Constant inspections of these works were made by the Land Record staff in order to see that proper wages were being paid, and the work for which the loan had been advanced really carried out. The works were mostly executed on the petty contract system, in accordance with the custom of the country, and but few complaints were received. The value of the works both as a permanent benefit to the rice country, and as a means of employment to the people during the hot weather, was very great. In Chanda, inclusive of Court of Wards works, tank work was in progress in no less than 451 villages, and the Deputy Commissioner estimates that the work done will secure from drought 32,000 acres of rice land hitherto unprotected. Of the total expenditure 44 per cent. was incurred in the zamindaris, where irrigation was backward. In Bhandara the eagerness with which applicants came forward for the loans, and the extent of the work done, were alike remarkable; at one time, in June, work was in progress in 499 places. In Balaghat the average amount of each loan was smaller than in the other districts. The number of workers reached their maximum in February, and the works were closed in August.

Chhattisgarh Division.

Still greater use of famine loans in Chhattisgarh.

105. In Raipur and Bilaspur still greater use was made of famine loans, and during the hot weather they gave as much employment as the works under the Public Works Department. The Raipur works were constantly inspected, and special care taken to ensure the adequate payment of the workers. In May, the numbers employed on these works in Raipur had reached 46,458, or 17 per cent. of the total in receipt of relief. The Deputy Commissioner dwells very strongly on the importance of the works in reducing the number of persons for whom other relief would have had to be provided.

In Bilaspur the highest numbers employed, about 47,000, were reached in the end of April, and the Deputy Commissioner reports that if the numbers on works carried out from private funds are included, the total number relieved touched 70,000 in May. With the breaking of the rains the numbers both on loan

and private works rapidly decreased as earth-work became impossible, and it was doubtless the closing of these works that caused the rush on the Public Works Department relief-works in the monsoon months to which reference has already been made.

The amounts expended in loans in the two districts were as follows :—

	Land Improvement. Rs.	Famine Loans. Rs.	Total. Rs.
Raipur ...	1,35,858	2,55,843	3,91,701
Bilaspur ...	66,477	1,12,027	1,78,504

In Sambalpur Rs. 9,000 was given out in loans in the Padampur-Chandarpur Estate. This was expended on tank-works in 22 villages, and the numbers employed were returned in August as 3,786.

Summary of loan works for the Province as a whole.

106. For the Province as a whole, in the absence of information from several districts, it is difficult to estimate the numbers to whom loan works gave employment, but it may fairly be assumed that during the hot weather months these works relieved approximately the following maximum numbers :—

Jubbulpore Division	...	...	20,000
Nerbudda do.	...	...	15,000
Nagpur do.	...	...	70,000
Chhattisgarh do.	...	...	95,000
		Total ...	200,000

If these numbers be compared with those on State work-relief in May, 480,000, it will be evident what an important part loan works played in the relief operations of the hot weather. And, as the borrowers naturally took care that the funds were utilized to the best advantage, it may confidently be affirmed that the work executed will be of permanent benefit to the agriculture of the country.

Over the whole Province the amounts advanced under the Land Improvement Loans Act and as Famine Loans respectively during the famine period were as follows :—

			Rs.
Land Improvement Loans	...	...	3,90,180
Famine Loans	...	...	11,53,360
		Total ...	15,43,540

(4). *Relief to Weavers and other Artizans.*

Relief to industrial classes not extensively undertaken.

107. Except to the numerous class of weavers, chiefly in the Nagpur District, it was not necessary generally to extend relief in the form provided for by Articles 104 to 106 of the Central Provinces Famine Code, which contemplate the employment of artizans on their own trades rather than on relief-works. The industries of the Province, except agriculture and weaving, are few and insignificant ; and a large proportion of the weaver class, consisting of Mahárs or Mahras (*vide* paragraph 6), readily accept other labour, and crowded the relief works.

In the districts of the Jubbulpore Division no relief of the kind was attempted in Saugor and Seoni. An industrial relief centre was opened for a short time in Damoh, but closed very shortly under the orders of the Commissioner, who did not consider that such a measure was necessary. In Jubbulpore no weaver-relief was started, but an advance of Rs. 2,188 was given to iron smelters through the Forest Department. This community number with their families some 3,000 persons, and are under the protection of the Forest Department, which supplies them with fuel at a fixed rate per furnace. The advance was utilized for the manufacture of tools for famine works.

Iron smelters in Jubbulpore.

In Mandla, some aid was given to distressed artizans, including weavers, in the town of Mandla from the Charitable Fund, but an attempt by the Famine Relief Officer, Mr. Sharp, to induce the rural weavers of his circle to accept advances under an agreement that they should supply cloth at reasonable rates to the full value of the advances, failed, owing to the suspicious nature of the weavers themselves who rejected the offer.

Refusal of weavers to accept terms in Mandla.

In the Nerbudda Division the only attempt made to introduce weaver-relief was in Nimar, in the case of the large weaving community of the town of Burhanpur. Here also the offer was rejected; and on the occurrence of the great fire in that town in April the poorer weavers obtained labour in the general work of re-building, while the better classes, who weave the finer cloths with gold embroidery, profited by the destruction of much of the stocks which had been in the hands of dealers, and which they were immediately set to work to replenish.

And in Nimar.

108. Turning to the Nagpur Division, in Wardha no action was taken, while in Chanda and Bhandara relief of this description was given to a limited extent from Charitable Funds, the weavers being given employment in providing the clothes required for charitable distribution. In the latter district it was found that even the Koshtis (or superior class of weavers) would, if hard pressed, come on to the regular relief-works. In Balaghat also the weavers, being chiefly of low caste (Mahras), resorted to the ordinary relief-works, but Rs. 65 was expended in one large village on giving this class employment, and they also received help in the ordinary way from the Charitable Fund.

In Nagpur, regular relief from Government funds to the weavers, who are here Koshtis and Momins (poor Muhammadan weavers), was specially organized in August in the towns of Nagpur, Kamptee and Umrer. The system followed was to make advances to middlemen, who were to employ those weavers only who were distressed, the selection of persons to be employed being subject to the approval of officers of Government. These advances amounted to half the value of the cloth to be supplied. The middlemen out of the advances supplied materials to the weavers and made them cash payments from time to time, which were adjusted against their wages. The cloth manufactured was eventually purchased by Government from the middlemen at prices slightly in excess of the market-rates, which were lower than usual owing to the general distress and the fact that the year was one in which Hindu marriages were forbidden.

System followed in Nagpur.

The system of employing middlemen was found to succeed well. They were responsible to Government that the work turned out was good value for the amount advanced, and that wages were duly paid. The wages amounted to a fourth of the whole outlay, but only yielded a bare subsistence to the workers. Very few complaints were received from workers, and the few cases of underpayment were promptly redressed. The cloth was valued by paid appraisers and cloth merchants, at a price slightly in excess of the market-rate, but not in excess of the normal rate in ordinary years. The average value of the cloth received varied in the three towns as stated below :—

			Rs.
Umrer	...	...	10 to 12 per piece.
Nagpur	...	....	5 to 6 ,,
Kamptee	...	...	2 ,,

In the last town the Momins weave very coarse cloth, generally purchased by the poor. In the first the work of the Koshtis is noted for its fineness.

The amount of the advances given and the value of the cloth received were as follows :—

			Rs.
Advances given	...	...	85,816
Adjusted to date	...	...	83,743

The final disposal of the cloth is not yet settled, but it is expected that before this Report is issued the whole will have been disposed of at prices which will involve but a small loss to Government.

The maximum numbers relieved were :—

Nagpur	...	...	3,566	September and October.
Kamptee	...	...	3,188	September.
Umrer	...	...	1,095	do.
	Total	...	7,849	

Action in Raipur.

109. In the Chhattisgarh Division operations were undertaken both in Raipur and Bilaspur. In the former the Charitable Fund Committee made advances to weavers to the extent of Rs. 20,589, distributed among 3,147 persons, and took the cloth furnished for the purposes of charitable relief; a sum of Rs. 3,850 was refunded to the Committee from Government funds as representing the loss suffered by the Charitable Fund in the difference between the amount of the advances and the value of the cloth rendered.

Metal workers were also relieved by the Charitable Fund Committee, some Rs. 2,000 being expended.

Action in Bilaspur.

In Bilaspur, relief of this kind was started in numerous villages, advances of thread being made direct to the weavers, and the cloth being purchased from them at rates at first fixed at 6 annas per *thán* or piece, and afterwards by weight at 5 annas per *ser*. The advances were managed by zamindars in some cases, and in others by malguzars or schoolmasters. The precise financial results cannot be stated, as the local managers were allowed to make fresh advances out of the sale proceeds of cloth received. Some of the cloth was sold at favourable rates to the Charitable Fund for distribution to paupers, and the rest in some cases fetched a little below cost price, and in others yielded a fair profit. The direct expenditure, exclusive of the return obtained from the receipts, was about Rs. 18,000.

(5). *Fixation of Wages.*

Sliding scale of wages.

110. There is little to remark under this head. Wages were adjusted periodically as prices rose or fell, so as to enable the workers to buy the prescribed rations. They thus had to be fixed in the rains when prices were highest to correspond to a rate of $7\frac{1}{2}$ or 8 *sers* in the majority of districts, and to one of $6\frac{1}{2}$ and even 6 in the Plateau districts of Betul and Chhindwara and in Balaghat.

Except in Jubbulpore.

In Jubbulpore, however, where prices did not rise so much as in most districts, they were fixed at 10, $9\frac{1}{2}$ and 9 seers in the three tahsils respectively, and were not subsequently raised. The Deputy Commissioner explains that although prices rose somewhat above that scale, it was found unnecessary to give more favourable rates for three reasons :—

first, that during the hot weather the works attracted a good many people who were not in great need of relief;

secondly, that, generally speaking, there were two or more persons from the same family on the works whose combined earnings more than sufficed for their support; and

thirdly, that malguzars who had started works from famine loans complained that owing to the competition of relief-works they were unable to obtain labourers.

It must be added, however, that in order to keep supplies of food-grains procurable at outlying works at market-rates, it was in many cases necessary to arrange with contractors to supply grain at relief-works. The subject belongs to the heading 'Arrangements for supplying grain,' which will be subsequently treated.

It must be understood that, while wages were fixed according to the prevailing rates of the grain selected as a staple, there were, especially after the middle of the hot weather, many other forms of food procurable on the works which were often much cheaper than the staple grains. Thus various forms of melons and cucumbers were plentiful in the late hot weather and rains, and maize cobs (*bhuttas*) were abundant and very cheap in August and September. Early in the year, on relief-works in districts inhabited by Gonds, were often to be seen preparations of yams (*báichándi, Dioscorea*), and masses of gum flavoured with molasses (*gur*), which seemed to be popular. The food of the people was thus more varied than might be imagined, and the daily wage generally commanded a larger stock of food than its strict equivalent in grain. It is certain that the workers saved largely upon what they received in coin, and the daily takings of the grain-sellers never approached the daily total of wages paid out.

Wages on local and loan works.

111. The system followed on local works was of course the same as on those under the Public Works Department, except on the works carried out through the agency of malguzars in Raipur and Bilaspur. In these, as also on loan works in the Chhattisgarh and Wainganga rice districts, the petty contract system, familiar to the people, of so many cubic feet of earth-work (locally calculated at so many *pachoris* or *dángnis*—a measure of five cubits in length by one in breadth and depth) per rupee, was followed, the number of cubic feet to be done being fixed by the Deputy Commissioner on a lower scale than that adopted in ordinary times. The arrangements for weak workers in Raipur have already been referred to. In the northern districts, where much work was done by small proprietors and large cultivators, less interference was possible, but complaints of under-payment were rare, and the competition which the numerous relief-works offered was no doubt salutary in inducing employers to give adequate wages.

(6). *Money-value and Utility of Work done.*

112. So far as the Public Works Department works are concerned, the subject is fully treated in the Note by the Chief Engineer, which forms one of the Appendices to this Report.

Money value of work on Public Works Department works.

Altogether 89,648,190 day-units were relieved (workers and dependents) at a cost of Rs. 1,02,88,297, giving 1·8 annas per day-unit or nine persons per diem to the rupee. The efficiency of the work, as compared with the value at ordinary contract rates, was, exclusive of gratuitous relief, 2·3 to 1, and inclusive of gratuitous relief 2·5 to 1. The Chief Engineer points out that there are great divergencies from this average rate in different districts, the results in which vary greatly both with the efficiency of the supervision and the condition of the workers. The highest cost was in Damoh, 4·4 and 5·2 (where piece-work was never brought into force, and a large proportion of the Public Works Department relief-work was done in the rains), and in Mandla 3·7 and 4·2, where the labour was least efficient and the management was bad. On the other hand, in Betul, Nagpur and Bhandara the cost was only from 50 to 70 per cent. in excess of contract rates. In the first of these the supervision under Sergeant Desmond is reported to have been of special excellence; in the two latter also the control, under Messrs. Meehan and McQuillen, was very good, labour was more efficient, and it was found possible to get better work out of the labourers.

Utility of Public Works Department work.

So far as the utility of the work done is concerned, the Chief Engineer reports that 579 miles of new roads have been constructed, of which 429 are metalled or gravelled,* and that 819 miles of road have been raised in class, of which 692 have been metalled or gravelled; of these roads he remarks that "with some insignificant exceptions, they will all be of great value to the Province." The great majority of them will form valuable feeder roads to the railways, while others make remote portions of the upland districts accessible to wheeled traffic. All of these works

* The word used is *muramed*, which means spread with *murum* (*moorum*), a name applied in these Provinces to disintegrated rock whether basalt, granite, or of other kinds, used as a material to harden the road surface or to mix with harder metal.

have not yet been completed, and some masonry work, on culverts and causeways at water-crossings, has still to be done to convert them into thoroughly useful roads, but most of this work can be gradually carried out from the ordinary Public Works Department Budget in the course of a few years.

Information incomplete regarding money value of local works.

113. Respecting local works under Civil Officers the information forthcoming is much less definite. So far as the money value is concerned, details have not been furnished from most districts. The following districts return the actual cost of the work done, exclusive of gratuitous relief, as compared with its money value :—

Saugor	...	1·5 to 1.
Mandla	...	2·7 „ 1.
Seoni	...	1·5 „ 1.

For the other districts of the Jubbulpore Division similar details are not furnished. In the Nerbudda and Nagpur Divisions local works under Civil Officers were of importance only in Chhindwara and Chanda. The rate in Chhindwara is not stated, but in Chanda the Deputy Commissioner has worked out the result as 431 cubic feet of earthwork to the rupee, an outturn considered fairly satisfactory in comparison with the amount usually executed on task-work in ordinary times.

In Raipur and Bilaspur, where these works were mostly carried out under the agency of malguzars, precise details cannot be expected. But in the case of Raipur, the Deputy Commissioner states that more than three-fourths of the expenditure is said to have been incurred on good work which would have cost as much at ordinary rates, the balance representing the amount spent on inefficient labour. He explains that, these being village works, no special establishment of a costly character was maintained, there was no expenditure on hutting, and for the most part the labourers used their own tools.

In general it may be said that wherever the local works were carried out on the same system as Public Works Department works, and were in substitution for them, the cost incurred was heavy; but wherever such works were undertaken merely as supplementary to those under the Public Works Department and employed only local labour, they could, for the reasons explained by the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, be economically executed. But it is unfortunately not probable that such good results were everywhere attained; and where works were overcrowded (as at the Jubbulpore relief centres in the winter months) and supervision lax, the outturn was necessarily poor.

Utility of local works.

114. As regards the utility of the works, those carried out at relief centres in Mandla are considered to have been the least useful. Patwaris and local committees were the only supervising agency, labour was inefficient and professional advice seldom available. It is too early to judge finally of the success of the new tanks made, but while in some cases, as in regard to some of the tanks in Damoh, failure has to be admitted, in others, both in that district and elsewhere, many useful works have been constructed. It is probable that the greatest success has been attained in the rice country, where the people themselves are more skilled in tank construction. Elsewhere success has depended largely on the amount of professional supervision available. The decision in Bilaspur to confine operations to tanks for watering purposes has reduced the agricultural value of the work done in that district.

The value and utility of the works carried out with the aid of famine loans have already been referred to.

(7). *Railways and Private Employers.*

Railway work.

115. The construction of the Saugor-Katni extension of the Indian Midland Railway afforded considerable employment for able-bodied labourers in the districts of Saugor and Damoh and in the Murwara Tahsil of Jubbulpore during the whole of the famine period. Some of the labour employed was, however, imported, and the figures do not wholly refer to local labour.

The numbers employed were:—

Date.	Saugor.	Damoh.	Jubbulpore.	Total.
December 15th, 1896	6,304	8,337	5,709	20,350
March 15th, 1897	6,918	11,681	4,435	23,034
May 31st ,, ...	8,942	10,418	4,326	23,686
July 31st ,, ...	4,018	6,096	3,660	13,774
September 15th ,, ...	4,835	6,338	4,321	15,494
October 31st ,, ...	1,656	3,620	1,549	6,825

These figures give a clear idea of the amount of employment which the railway afforded during the cold weather of 1896-97, and the hot weather and rains of 1897, respectively. The numbers exceeded those shown above for short periods in January and February.

The only other work of this kind in progress in the Province was the earth-work for the Raipur-Dhamtari Tramway in Raipur. For a part of the rains one length of this work was carried out as a famine relief work, and formed a useful supplement to the Public Works Department and other works in progress. The actual value of the work done will be recovered from the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Company.

Work done by private employers from private funds.

116. So far as private employers were concerned, the series of bad years which preceded the famine had already largely reduced their resources in many districts, and few had means to undertake works on a large scale. This was especially the case in the districts of the Jubbulpore Division, and apart from those who were assisted by loans from Government, only a few of the rich employed labour to any appreciable extent. The reports from the Nerbudda Division are to the same effect, and no details of any such work are furnished except in the case of Betul, where allusion is made to two private tanks which gave employment for three months to about 300 persons. A certain amount of work was, however, done by a few solvent estates under the Court of Wards in both these Divisions. In the Nagpur and Chhattisgarh Divisions, however, landowners had not been so severely affected by previous bad years, except in Balaghat, and in addition to the work done from loans, a considerable amount was undertaken from private funds in most of the districts in the construction of tanks and field embankments. In Nagpur and Wardha a number of petty works of this description were carried out, and the Court of Wards undertook some larger works. In Chanda the Deputy Commissioner has estimated that private expenditure, exclusive of that incurred in wards' estates, was Rs. 28,000. In Bhandara and Raipur the numbers employed have been included in those returned for loan works, but in Bilaspur, where the district staff were most active in inducing the wealthy to construct useful tanks or embankments from private funds, the Deputy Commissioner states that in the middle of the hot weather some 25,000 persons thus obtained employment.

In Sambalpur, where all the cultivating classes received a large accession of wealth from good crops and high prices, a great deal of private employment was available. Several small works were undertaken from funds raised by subscription at the sub-divisional town of Bargarh, and a number of roads were constructed from estate funds in the large zamindari estates of Phuljhar and Borasambhar.

Altogether it may be said that in the south of the Province at all events private employers substantially supplemented, both with the aid of loans and from private funds, the employment offered by the State on public relief works.

117. Complaints were made both by railway officers and private employers that the competition of relief-works prevented them from obtaining a sufficient supply of labour. On investigation of these complaints, however, it was generally reported that either the contractors employed by the railway, or the private employers who complained, were endeavouring to take advantage of the hard times to under-pay the labourers, and that all who offered a fair wage could obtain as many coolies as they wanted. During the rains malguzars in some districts asserted that sufficient labourers were not available for weeding the fields. There was so far truth in this that labourers unable to obtain employment in their villages during the hot weather resorted to the relief-works, and some of these when the rains broke may have been unwilling to risk the chance of not obtaining regular employment at home. But, generally speaking, though the point may be open to some doubt, it is probable that those who had difficulty were endeavouring to get their weeding done at a cost less than that justified by the high price of grain, though the wages offered may not have been less than the usual rates. The Deputy Commissioner of Jubbulpore arranged to draft labourers off the works to their villages in cases where the malguzars were reliable persons who guaranteed them regular employment; and the object of the "payment by results" rules of August 1897, as already explained (*supra*, paragraph 89), was to remove all inducements to able-bodied persons, who could obtain agricultural work, to remain on relief-works by refusing them more than a bare subsistence there.

Complaints by private employers regarding competition of relief-works.

B.—Gratuitous Relief.

(1). *Dependents on Works.*

118. The Code prescriptions regarding dependents are as follows (Articles 77 and 78):—

> Non-working children and dependents may be maintained either by cash allowances through those on whom they are dependent or by relief at kitchens. The former shall be put in charge of nurses while their parents are engaged on work. Infirm persons unfit for work who apply for relief shall receive the minimum wage, and if dependent on relief-workers employed on the work, shall be allowed to remain on such work so long as such relief-workers are so employed: if not so dependent they may be drafted to a poor-house.
>
> The allowances given for children and dependents must be shown as gratuitous relief, and formal enquiry should be made when the number of persons so relieved exceeds ten per cent. of those on relief-works.

Code provisions regarding dependents of workers.

The first system mentioned, that of a cash dole to relief-workers for the support of their dependents, was at first followed. But later on this arrangement was found to be unsatisfactory. Parents, with the callousness which privation seems to engender in famine times, hoarded the cash allowances and fed their children on mere scraps from their own food, with the result that the latter soon became emaciated. Under the piece-work system it was reckoned that workers should earn enough to support their own dependents, but in this case also experience showed that dependents and children were neglected. It was in consequence decided in March 1897 that wherever there seemed reason for thinking that parents neglected their children and other dependents, all such dependents should be fed at the kitchens attached to the works, and this system was subsequently extended very largely during the rains.

Defects of cash dole system.

119. As regards the proportion of dependents to workers, experience has also shown that it is impossible to adhere to any rigid percentage. A practice sprang up in some places (especially in the Nerbudda Valley) for women living in the neighbourhood of a work to bring a number of children from the village and pass them off as their own; and no doubt occasionally children were fed whose parents were well able to support them. But as distress grew more intense in the rains, it was found necessary to give food freely and liberally at the kitchens on the works both to children of the neighbourhood and to all infirm persons applying for it, whether these were connected with workers or not. The Public Works Department kitchens were thus made to serve the purpose of general kitchens, and were of much practical

Proportion of dependents to workers.

utility. Those of the infirm who were not strictly dependents of workers were in the course of time drafted to village relief or, when this was not possible, to poor-houses. As the works were being closed in the autumn, drafts of this kind became larger and more frequent. It is obvious that with such a system of liberally admitting non-workers to kitchens, the ten per cent. limit could not be adhered to; but experience seems to show that this figure is considerably less than may be expected even under the strictest conditions.

The proportion of dependents to workers during various months of the famine period was as follows:—

	Workers.	Dependents.	Percentage of dependents on workers.
December 1896	109,802	4,819	4·3
January 1897	208,605	26,261	12·6
February „	217,504	44,724	20·5
March „	321,823	62,910	19·5
April „	386,945	75,323	19·2
May „	479,947	86 823	18·1
June „	273,942	44 685	16·3
July „	341,781	56,256	16·4
August „	252,610	37,540	14·9
September „	229,113	30,064	13·1
October „	82,478	12,690	15·3

The proportion reached its highest in February, and continued fairly constant during the hot weather. The introduction of the payment-by-results system led to an increase in the number of dependents in August, but drafting to other forms of gratuitous relief kept the proportion lower than it would otherwise have been.

120. To turn to individual districts, the proportion of dependents was specially large (particularly during the first months of the famine) in the districts of Narsinghpur and Hoshangabad, where other forms of gratuitous relief were less extensively resorted to, as well as in severely distressed districts such as Mandla and Balaghat. The percentage of dependents to workers in these districts, respectively, in February, May, July and August was as follows:—

District variations.

	February.	May.	July.	August.
Narsinghpur	23	15	15	15
Hoshangabad	25	18	22	18
Mandla	19	31	39	51
Balaghat	23	26	20	14

The very high proportion in Mandla was due to the utilization of the works for the purpose of gratuitous relief while house-to-house visitation was being organised (see below, paragraph 131); in Balaghat also there was probably some connection between the high proportion of dependents on works and the delay in organising village relief (below, paragraph 136).

The proportion was also rather high at times in Bhandara, Jubbulpore, Raipur and Seoni; but in Bilaspur it rarely exceeded 10 per cent.

The proportion borne by children to the total dependents would be of interest to record; but in the early stage of the operations the numbers of men, women and children were not always separately reported; from the later returns, however, it appears that from 90 to 95 per cent. of the total dependents were children.

The number of adult dependents was noticeably large in Jubbulpore, Mandla and Balaghat, and remarkably so in Raipur, where the proportion of adults was frequently as much as 20 and even reached 33 per cent. of the total dependents. In Bilaspur the number of adult dependents was small during the hot weather, but increased considerably in the rains, when for a short time 20 per cent. of the dependents were adults.

(2). *Poor-houses.*

121. The Provincial Famine Code lays down that admissions to poor-houses should be limited to—

(1) persons who, being unfit for employment on works, cannot conveniently be sent to their homes;

(2) persons who, being fit for employment on works, refuse to labour.

Code prescriptions.

It further prescribes that inmates once received into a poor-house shall be kept there, if of the first class, until they are fit to be sent to their homes, if of the second, until they consent to work. It was rarely found possible to deal with the contumacious in this way, and the number of such persons sent to the poor-houses was not large. But in the latter half of the famine, from July onwards, persons who had been discharged from the poor-houses as fit for labour and refused to work, if they claimed re-admission, were put on penal diet.

Extension of poor-house relief.

122. Poor-house relief at the cost of public funds had been established in the districts of the Jubbulpore Division during the hot weather and rains of 1896; in other districts a good many poor-houses were maintained from private funds until they were taken over by Government in the early months of 1897, when the objects for which charitable contributions were to be utilised had been definitely determined. As far as possible, in order to ensure efficient management, poor-houses were opened only at district or tahsil head-quarters, but in a few cases where the head-quarters were at a great distance from the distressed areas these institutions were established under the supervision of superior Police Officers or local committees of well-to-do residents. As a rule, however, it was considered better to provide for such outlying tracts by means of relief-centres and village relief.

Classes of inmates.

The poor-houses of the Jubbulpore Division were at first crowded by starving wanderers, largely drawn from the adjoining Native States; those of the Nerbudda Valley by immigrants from Bhopal; and those of Nagpur and Wardha by labourers returning disappointed from Berar. Statistics on these points have been discussed in Chapter II. In the two former Divisions the numbers in poor-houses continued throughout to be largely influenced by the influx of foreigners; but in Nagpur and Chhattisgarh the inmates principally consisted of local wanderers, beggars, and incapable persons who had escaped the notice of the local relief officers, or who preferred begging to the labour of relief-works. The poor-house population was constantly shifting as fresh applicants came in, or wanderers were brought in by the Police, and on the other hand those who had become strong enough to work, or could be more fitly relieved at their homes, were drafted to works or sent to their villages.

Establishment.

The usual poor-house establishment consisted of a Superintendent, where possible an officer of the Naib-Tahsildar or Munsif class, but often an official of less status specially entertained for the purpose; a Hospital Assistant to look after the medical and sanitary arrangements; with a staff of cooks, warders, and sweepers.

123. Great difficulty was experienced at the outset in maintaining discipline among the paupers, and in preventing them from absconding and roving again about the town or district; and many cases occurred of persons who had been partially restored to health making their escape, and after a period of wandering returning again in a condition worse than on the occasion of their first entry. As, however, experience was gained, stronger enclosures were built and the numbers were reduced by drafts to works and village-relief; matters improved by degrees, and the management of the majority of poor-houses was in the latter portion of the famine period very successful. Orders were issued from time to time as to the dieting and medical treatment of paupers, and blankets were given to the inmates in the cold weather, until the Charitable Relief Fund took over the duty of providing them with extra comforts in the shape of clothing.

Difficulties of retaining inmates disposed to rove.

Three instances occurred of fires in poor-houses, in two of which lives were lost, and special instructions were issued as to the entertainment of paid warders and the arrangements for ensuring a safe exit in the event of fire. With the rains this danger disappeared.

Fires.

The poor-houses always continued to be most unpopular; but this is not surprising when it is considered that they were the last refuge for the lowest and poorest classes of the community. Thus it was that all the worst cases of emaciation were congregated in them; and association with the dirt and rags of the inmates, and the sights seen in them, were necessarily most repugnant to the respectable poor. There is, however, no reason to believe that they were not of inestimable benefit to the particular class of people who could not by reason of their wandering habits be reached by other forms of relief. The mortality in poor-houses was unhappily very large, as many wanderers were brought in at a stage when no relief could save them, and, in spite of food and nursing, succumbed before long to dysentery or diarrhœa; but in all districts large numbers were restored sufficiently to be drafted to relief-works. Precise details of these drafts are not available, but the Deputy Commissioner of Bhandara has recorded that from May to October, out of 4,612 admissions, 3,868 were discharged as fit for work.

Unpopularity of poor-houses.

Utility of poor-houses.

124. The following statement shows the number of poor-houses, the maximum number of inmates, the date of that maximum, and the proportion borne to the total numbers on relief in each district of the Province:—

District details.

District.	Number of poor-houses.	Maximum number of inmates.	Date at which maximum reached.	Percentage of total on relief.
Saugor	5	6 824	June 30th	19
Damoh	4	1,764	July 15th	2·8
Jubbulpore	5	4,164	January 31st	4·5
Mandla	2	1,534	August 15th	5·8
Seoni	2	938	July 15th	9·1
Narsinghpur	3	2,583	„ 15th	7·7
Hoshangabad	3	1,515	August 15th	3·3
Nimar	2	317	July 31st	1·7
Betul	1	383	September 15th	2·2
Chhindwara	2	634	July 31st	2·7
Wardha	2	647	August 15th	24·49
Nagpur	4	1,543	„ 31st	9·2
Chanda	..	...	...	...
Bhandara	4	950	July 31st	2·8
Balaghat	3	1,634	March 15th	7·3
Raipur	8	5,279	September 15th	7·4
Bilaspur	4	7,773	July 31st	7·0
Sambalpur	...	...	...	...
Whole Central Provinces ...	54	32,316	July 15th	5·8

The large proportion borne by poor-house inmates to the total number on relief in Nimar and Wardha is explained by the fact that these districts were not extensively distressed, and that the inmates, whose numbers were not large, were for the most part waifs and strays, wanderers from other districts. In Saugor the arrangements for drafting to works or village relief were for a time imperfect; when they were properly taken in hand the numbers fell rapidly.

The maximum numbers were generally reached in the rains, when wanderers were driven in for shelter; but in Balaghat the maximum occurred in March before village relief was generally established, and in Jubbulpore in January before foreigners had been deported. The differences between the actual numbers of the poor-house inmates in the various districts were very marked. The Vindhyan and Nerbudda valley districts, as well as Nagpur, had the largest numbers of aliens to provide for, and in Chhattisgarh, Mandla and Balaghat there was severe local distress in the rains. In these districts numbers were large; elsewhere they were inconsiderable.

(3). *Village and Town Relief.*

Code prescriptions regarding village relief.

125. As is well known, there is no Poor-law in India. In ordinary times the destitute members of society are entirely dependent upon the charity of their relatives and neighbours, and nothing in the nature of compulsory provision for such persons is enforced by legislation. Under ordinary conditions the piety of the community, and the recognized obligations of the joint-family system (which prevails universally among Hindus), suffice to provide a maintenance for those incapable of earning a living; but in times of famine these springs of private charity dry up, and it is necessary for the Government to intervene. Article 34 of the Provincial Famine Code provides that a list is to be drawn up by the *mukaddam* or village headman in every village of persons who from their circumstances are likely to require relief in their homes. For home-relief in towns there is no special provision, it having probably been thought that poor-houses would suffice; but on the 15th January 1897 instructions were given that the same procedure should be applied there, the ward members, in municipal towns, being entrusted with the duty of preparing the lists, which were to be checked by Government officers. The Code instances the following classes of persons who should receive gratuitous relief, "provided that they have nobody able, and by the custom of the country bound, to support them":—

(*a*) Idiots and lunatics.
(*b*) Cripples.
(*c*) Blind persons.
(*d*) All who from age or physical weakness are incapable of earning their living.
(*e*) All persons whose attendance on the sick or on infant children in their homes is absolutely necessary.

The initiative in ordering the preparation of registers of such persons is left by the Code to Commissioners of Divisions, "when, in their opinion, the scarcity is, or is likely to be, sufficiently great to require this precaution."

Problems of village relief.

126. The main problems which have to be dealt with in connection with the organization and administration of this form of relief are three in number :—

(*a*) that connected with the preparation of the register, the names to be entered in it, and the subsequent removals from and additions to the list to be made from time to time;

(*b*) that dealing with the form which the relief should take, *i. e.*, whether the dole should be in money or grain, and the periods at which it should be distributed;

(*c*) the question of the best agency for its distribution so as to ensure the receipt of the required amounts by the right recipients, and the check and control to be exercised.

Selection of recipients.

127. The Code, as has been seen, specifies with some precision the persons who are to be registered for relief: but in practice difficulties constantly arise. Thus, an infirm or incapable person may have hitherto been supported by a robust or well-to-do relative,

VILLAGE RELIEF.

and may on that account be omitted from the list; but the relative may go away from the village, or be unable or unwilling to continue his assistance. Again, an able-bodied person may, in spite of relief work being provided in the neighbourhood, refuse to resort to it, and prefer to remain at home until he becomes reduced to such a condition that he is incapable of working for his living. Lastly, there is the risk that in villages inhabited by the aborigines, who habitually during the late cold weather and summer either resort to the richer tracts for harvest labour or wander in the forests, living on their produce, persons driven to their homes by the coming on of the rains may suddenly fall victims to the diseases of the season, and be prostrated by illness in which their only resource is prompt and ample gratuitous relief. In the Note by Mr. Sharp, Famine Relief Officer in Mandla, which forms one of the Appendices of this Report, a vivid presentment will be found of the difficulties attending this form of relief in hill or forest tracts among aboriginal races.

It will be seen from these considerations that the numbers on village and town relief must necessarily differ very much at different stages of the famine. At the commencement private or domestic charity is still active, and it would be a mistake to relax its obligations. It would also be an incentive to idleness, and to unnecessary resort to relief, to admit too readily to gratuitous assistance persons originally able to work, whose debilitated condition is due to obstinate abstention from the means of earning a living provided for them. And in tracts inhabited by aborigines large numbers who, in the open season, are not to be found at home, and whose necessities in no way come to notice, have been proved by the experience of the present famine to require assistance during the rains.

Grain *versus* cash doles.

128. The decision of the second point referred to above, whether the relief should consist of cash or grain doles, and the intervals at which the doles should be distributed, depends on various considerations. If the dole is given in cash and for some days at a time, there is the danger that it will be recklessly consumed by the recipient in one or two copious meals, and that he will die of surfeit following on a reduced diet, or else starve for the remainder of the interval before a fresh dole can be given to him. The experiences of Famine Relief Officers afford evidence that these are real dangers, specially among a reckless and improvident population such as the aboriginal tribes or the Chamárs of Bilaspur. The Deputy Commissioner of the district just mentioned refers to a saying among the poor of his rural population to the effect that "he dies a good death who dies with a full stomach." Indeed it would appear that with several of those put on the village relief lists in Bilaspur it was a case of "eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." The reports on the distribution of advances for seed-grain in aboriginal tracts afford illustrations of a similar improvidence. In this same district Mr. Low, Assistant Commissioner, relates the case of a Gond who expended the whole of his seed-grain advance on a single feast to his friends and neighbours. On the other hand, there is not wanting evidence that the recipients of cash doles often save them up instead of devoting them to the food for which they are given: this propensity to save has already been remarked on in connection with wages on relief-works.

Another difficulty with reference to cash doles occurs in remote forest tracts where there are only a few grain-dealers in widely scattered villages. The recipient may have difficulty in buying food, especially in the rains, when swollen streams cut off communications. It was this difficulty, as will presently be seen, which led to the establishment of relief-centres in Mandla and the Jagirs of Chhindwara.

On the other hand, the distribution of grain doles periodically in inaccessible villages is most difficult of arrangement, and a check upon it almost impossible to enforce; while it is still open to the recipient to barter his dole for drink or more expensive food to be quickly consumed.

Agency for distribution.

129. Lastly, there is the third problem, how to arrange for the distribution so that the distressed shall promptly receive the required relief. The Code contemplates the village headman as

the responsible disburser: but in aboriginal villages the headmen are often entirely illiterate, and incapable of dealing with daily fractions of larger sums; and in many parts of the Province District Officers have not thought this agency sufficiently trustworthy for the distribution to be committed to it. The agency of check and control is that of the Revenue or Circle Inspector, and such inspection and control have been throughout the famine the chief duty of those officers. Over them have been the Famine Relief Officers to be presently described. It is on the activity and efficiency of these controlling agencies that the effective working of this most important form of relief mainly depends.

Early operations of village relief.

130. As already noticed, Commissioners are responsible for directing the preparation of village relief registers; and in the Jubbulpore and Nerbudda Divisions orders were given in November 1896 that this should be put in hand. The registers, for the reasons above indicated, did not at first include many names; and it must be admitted that the importance of this form of relief, novel to the people and to the district and village staff, was not at the outset fully appreciated. When the lists were submitted for approval it was found that in many districts the numbers entered were very small, while in others names had been too freely inserted; and their revision before payments began took some time. On the 15th January, when District Officers had been relieved of the direct supervision of relief-works, the Chief Commissioner issued careful instructions for the active pushing forward of house to house relief; and the numbers, as will be seen below, gradually increased. The scale of monthly payments was provisionally laid down as follows:—

	Rs.	A.	P.
Adult male	2	8	0
„ female	2	4	0

Children lesser sums according to age.

Payments were to be made in advance by the Revenue or Circle Inspector to the *mukaddam*, and on each visit to a village the Inspector was required to satisfy himself that the payments of the past month had been properly made.

Large extension in the rains.

The further extension of this system in the various districts formed the subject of constant communication with Commissioners, and the orders of the 2nd July, requiring still further enlargement and a more liberal interpretation of the provisions of the Code as to the persons entitled to this form of relief, have already been quoted. In districts where prices rose materially, the monthly rates of payments were raised on the recommendation of District Officers. As distress increased on the advent of the rains, and the difficulty of the punctual administration of village relief was enhanced by the increase in the numbers relieved and the obstacles to communication, additional inspecting officers of the rank of Tahsildar or Naib-Tahsildar were placed at the disposal of Deputy Commissioners, and the staff of Revenue Inspectors was doubled or trebled according as the necessities of the case demanded.

Lastly, as the pressure of famine slackened with the harvesting of the autumn crops, the distribution of this form of relief was gradually contracted. In the Jubbulpore Division the lists were scrutinised after the October payments had been made, and gradually reduced during that month and November, the final payments being made in the first week in December. The same system was enforced in the Nerbudda Division. In Nagpur, Wardha and Chanda the last payments made were those for November, and in Bhandara those for December; while in Balaghat a few continued into January 1898. In Chhattisgarh also a few payments extended over the end of December. Practically, however, it may be said that village relief ceased generally with the end of the year 1897.

The conditions of the different divisions of the Province now demand consideration in detail.

JUBBULPORE DIVISION.

Village relief in Jubbulpore Division.

131. Orders by the Commissioner for the preparation of the village lists issued early in November 1896. A beginning of the distribution of doles according to these lists was made in Saugor in December, in Jubbulpore in January, in Damoh and Mandla in February, and in Seoni (which was at the time less distressed) in April. The progress made in the course of the hot weather in the several districts will be seen from the table given below :—

Date.	Saugor.	Damoh.	Jubbulpore.	Mandla.	Seoni.
January 31st	4,428	...	1,842	...	...
February 28th	6,083	4,481	13,721	135	..
April 15th	7,701	6,490	15,753	944	432
May 31st	10,769	10,921	18,418	1,880	1,977

So far considerable extension had taken place in Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore and a beginning had been made in Mandla and Seoni. The Deputy Commissioner of Saugor found in May that some persons had been given relief who were not fit recipients of it, and issued orders to have the numbers somewhat reduced. This action, though doubtless fully justified by the actual experience of the Deputy Commissioner, may not improbably have had the effect of deterring subordinate officials from sufficiently expanding the relief lists.

The next period embraces the monsoon months of June, July and August, in respect of the last two of which the Administration had issued general orders for the greater expansion of the system. The figures are :—

Date.	Saugor.	Damoh.	Jubbulpore.	Mandla.	Seoni.
May 31st as already given ...	10,769	10,921	18,418	1,880	1,977
June 30th	8,715	11,256	17,849	2,268	2,067
July 15th	7,572	11,748	20,186	2,334	2,196
August 15th	9,298	13,098	33,519	8,414	7,251

Thus during this period the system was largely extended in Jubbulpore and substantially in Damoh. In Mandla and Seoni progress was slow until August, while in Saugor this form of relief diminished till the latter half of July.

After this period it was found necessary to enlarge village relief still further (except in Jubbulpore where its previous expansion had sufficed to overtake the distress), until the autumn harvest relieved the situation :—

Period.	Saugor.	Damoh.	Jubbulpore.	Mandla.	Seoni.
August 31st	12,514	14,599	32,392	14,649	8,994
September 30th	21,084	15,246	24,526	20,596	13,195
October 31st	19,512	13,068	22,772	22,158	9,102
November 30th	9,911	4,273	13,827	17,757	5,281
December 15th	...	...	...	4,893	...

132. Only in Jubbulpore and Damoh can it be confidently said that the extension of village relief was completely successful in keeping pace with the distress; in Saugor and Seoni more was required in July and early August; in Mandla the matter had not been sufficiently pushed during the early rains: the large expansion in August and the autumn months required the most strenuous and self-sacrificing efforts on the part of the Relief Officers, and this form of relief had ultimately to be continued here for a longer period.

Success in administering village relief in Jubbulpore Division.

In Jubbulpore payments were made daily by *mukaddams* during the open season, and weekly in the rains, from advances received by them; in Damoh *mukaddams* and patwaris were the distributing agency: the *mukaddam* had 15 days' advances in hand to cover cases of delay in their renewal; in Saugor also *mukaddams* were the distributing agency. In Mandla and Seoni, where the *mukaddams* were generally illiterate, the Land Record staff had mainly to be relied on to effect the distribution.

The question how far delay in extension of village relief conduced to an increase in mortality, and how far the causes were preventible, will be discussed in the Chapter dealing with the mortality statistics; but it may be observed that the Commissioner of Jubbulpore took prompt steps, soon after taking charge of the Division at the beginning of July, to correct any undue strictness in the classification of recipients so as to ensure that the benefits of the relief should be extended to everyone "who looked half-starved and could not reasonably be sent to works," whether it was ascertained or not that he could if he chose have found employment. In wild tracts and with half civilised tribes the liberal distribution of gratuitous relief at this season was absolutely necesssary if life was to be saved.

NERBUDDA DIVISION.

133. The Commissioner of the Division issued instructions for the preparation of village relief lists at the end of November 1896, and payments were actually first made on the following dates:—

System adopted in Nerbudda Division.

Chhindwara, middle of January.
Narsinghpur, end of January.
Betul, February.
Nimar, March.
Hoshangabad, end of March.

The system adopted was as follows: Revenue Inspectors held advances from which they distributed to *mukaddams* of villages where registered recipients resided sufficient money to cover the subsistence allowance for three weeks. The *mukaddams* paid daily, and the patwaris kept the village accounts. The Revenue Inspector revised the village registers each time that he visited a village (usually once a fortnight), and at the same time reimbursed the mukaddam's expenditure. The European supervising officer checked the Inspector's work, and satisfied himself that all persons who were entitled to relief were brought on the village register, that the names of disqualified persons were removed, and that the payees had actually been paid the money which they were represented as receiving. For these purposes he paraded the villagers wherever he went.

During the early part of the famine in this Division the village lists were limited to the "permanently helpless." The Commissioner writes:— "Up to the end of March the number of persons noticeably reduced by privation was nowhere large except in the Chhindwara Jagirs, where the robust population had gone off to the harvest, leaving the old and frail without sufficient support." For these it may be remarked that special relief centres had been established. The Commissioner pressed on his district officers in April the necessity of extending village relief "in view of the fact that the reaping of the rabi harvest left without the means of subsistence a number of infirm persons who had been employed as watchers of crops; but," he adds, "it was not until after the beginning of the rains that the numbers on the village registers of poor began to show a marked increase."

Development of village relief in the Nerbudda Division.

The Jubbulpore test was extended to the Division in August, and the numbers rapidly rose. This was especially the case in the uplands of Betul, regarding which the Commissioner writes:—

Special difficulty in Betul.

The inhabitants of the hilly tracts to the extreme south of the district (bordering on Berar) had as usual supported themselves on jungle products during the hot weather, and had not betaken themselves in any numbers to work on the roads close by. When the rains came they were still less inclined to do so, and as they had not been able to lay by the usual reserve stock of food owing to the cultivators having reaped their own crops and refrained from employing hired labour for sowing and weeding, they came in numbers upon the village relief lists.

Here and elsewhere it was noticed at the commencement of the rains that wherever labourers had garden plots or patch cultivation, which they had sown with maize, they were reluctant to leave their villages, preferring to stay and struggle on within sight of the crop upon which their hopes were built. Under these circumstances persons dependent on them for subsistence fared badly, as the small stock of food had to be shared between the able-bodied and the infirm.

Numbers on village relief in the Nerbudda Division.

134. The following statement will show the extent to which the distribution of village relief developed in the districts of the Division:—

Period.	Narsinghpur.	Hoshangabad	Nimar.	Betul.	Chhindwara.
April 30th	392	1,637	165	1,299	207
May 31st	1,143	2,255	406	1,652	474
June 30th	2,175	2,543	493	1,978	518
July 31st	7,364	4,881	695	2,590	740
August 31st	12,307	6,181	1,217	3,967	1,461
September 30th	13,815	7,863	1,589	15,974	7,699
October 31st	9,044	8,806	2,058	12,524	10,203
November 30th	5,118	5,989	1,715	7,583	4,515
December 15th	4,277	6,243	...	6,695	1,648

The rapid expansion of this form of relief in Betul during September and October emphasizes the lesson taught by Mandla of the need of early relief in their homes during the rains for the aboriginal races. The district which, considering the extent of the distress, shows the least expansion of village relief is Hoshangabad; and it must be admitted that here enough was not done in this direction.

Nagpur Division.

System followed in Nagpur and Wardha.

135. Village relief properly so-called was never introduced in the districts of Wardha and Nagpur, as the condition of the people did not appear to require it, and private charity was still active, especially in Nagpur. The matter was several times considered by the Chief Commissioner with the local officers, but the latter strongly urged the undesirability of creating an organization for Government relief while alms were still being freely given by the well-to-do: such an attempt would at once stop the flow of charity, and it might have taken some time for Government to overtake the distress which would be left without provision. In the rains, however, lists were prepared in Wardha and given to the *mukaddams*, who were told to distribute food to the persons named, and recover from the treasury the amount spent if it could not be met from private charity. A good many persons were relieved, but many well-to-do *mukaddams* never claimed a refund from Government. In Nagpur, where kitchen-relief was resorted to in the rains at the cost both of public and private funds, village watchmen had instructions to bring to light all cases of persons who from illness

were unable to come to the kitchens and were not receiving private charity, and the kitchen rules were relaxed to admit of their being sent raw rations. For the rest the *mukaddams* were warned of their duties in organizing charity for the distressed, and much private charity was thus administered; but there were many *mukaddams* in this district also who were ashamed to claim refunds from Government, and only Rs. 360 was actually claimed.

Chanda system.

In Chanda also, where distress was not severe, regular village lists were not prepared, but in the rains 68 centres were established, at which local committees under the supervision of Revenue Inspectors distributed daily doles of grain to the poor of the village and to any who came from neighbouring villages and were in evident need; and people who from any cause were unable to come daily were allowed to receive a week's rations. Revenue Inspectors also took grain from these centres to villages where grain was not always procurable, and distributed it among the poor. Private charity of a similar character was also stimulated.

Village relief in Bhandara and Balaghat.

136. In Bhandara and Balaghat regular lists were prepared and village-relief administered under the provisions of the Famine Code. In Bhandara the lists were put in hand in November, and relief began to be administered early in the year; after the *mahua* season the lists had to be greatly expanded; and after the rains broke, when local works were curtailed, and many labourers with their dependents returned to their villages, further additions were made to them; and later on as the rains advanced the Jubbulpore tests were adopted, and the numbers rose largely.

In Balaghat, though lists were prepared, delays took place in the distribution, and it was not until April that this relief was put on a regular footing. As everywhere else, the numbers rose considerably in the rains.

Statement of numbers relieved.

137. In the three districts first mentioned, the maximum numbers on village relief were :—

Wardha	...	767 (November),
Nagpur	...	3,286 (November),
Chanda	...	8,887 (October).

The Nagpur figures relate chiefly to town-relief.

The figures for the two severely distressed districts of the Division are as follows :—

Period.	Bhandara.	Balaghat.
February 28th	30	...
March 31st	236	...
April 15th	302	3,678
May 31st	3,287	8,300
June 30th	4,539	9,015
July 31st	6,486	10,005
August 31st	7,224	11,926
September 30th	12,523	13,203
October 31st	16,287	12,648
November 30th	7,485	6,782

CHHATTISGARH DIVISION.

Village-relief in Chhattisgarh.

138. Village-relief in this Division was confined to Raipur and Bilaspur, the necessities of the poor in Sambalpur being amply met by private charity. The lists were prepared at an early period in the famine, but doles only began to be distributed in Raipur in February and in Bilaspur in March. These were the months when, in these districts, pressure began to increase. In Raipur this relief was at first, as in many other districts, chiefly confined to "permanent incapables," but in Bilaspur this rule was less strictly adhered to. In both districts after the rains began the test adopted was chiefly the appearance of emaciation. In Raipur the doles, which according to locality consisted of cash or grain, were distributed by *mukaddams* from advances periodically given them by Revenue Inspectors. In Bilaspur the *mukaddams* were not regarded as trustworthy, and Revenue Inspectors were ordered as far as possible to make the distribution themselves. This at first, until the staff was strengthened, necessitated long intervals between each distribution, and was the reason why the recipients received at one time sums so large as to tempt them to spend their money extravagantly.

The extraordinary development of distress which ensued in Bilaspur upon the contraction of loan works at the beginning of the rains, before extra Public Works Department charges could be opened, led to a greater resort to village relief in this district than elsewhere. The numbers on the lists increased until they reached the enormous total of 90,000, nearly a twelfth of the whole population; and the immense difficulties encountered in distributing the sum of more than seven lakhs of rupees in small doles over a large expanse of country, especially in the rainy season, may be imagined. As in some others of the most deeply distressed districts of the Province, house-to-house relief was here carried on till quite the close of the year.

The numbers on village-relief in these two districts compare as follows:—

Period.	Raipur.	Bilaspur.
April 15th	1,917	2,551
May 31st	8,047	19,097
June 30th	9,737	35,764
July 31st	10,989	53,061
August 31st	19,635	75,318
September 30th	29,989	90,716
October 15th	34,586	81,123
Do. 31st	24,486	50,087
November 14th	14,318	25,435
December 15th	5,957	3,726
Do. 31st	.....	1,722

139. The following statement shows, for each district in the Province, the maximum numbers reached, the date at which they were reached, and the proportion they bore to the total population of the district :—

Statement showing proportion of persons relieved to total population in each district.

District.	Maximum numbers on village-relief.	Date at which maximum reached.	Percentage of the whole population of the district.
Saugor	22,618	October 15th ...	3·8
Damoh	15,709	Do. ...	4·8
Jubbulpore	33,519	August 15th ...	4·4
Mandla	22,158	October 31st ...	6·5
Seoni	13,587	Do. 15th ...	3·6
Narsinghpur	13,815	September 30th ...	3·7
Hoshangabad	8,806	October 31st ...	1·8
Nimar	2,058	Do. ...	0·7
Betul ... — ...	16,345	Do. 15th ...	5·1
Chhindwara	10,647	Do. ...	2·6
Wardha	767	November 30th ...	0·2
Nagpur	3,286	Do. 15th ...	0·4
Chanda	8,887	October 31st ...	1·2
Bhandara	16,287	Do. ...	2·2
Balaghat	13,405	Do. 15th ...	3·5
Raipur	34,586	Do. ...	2·2
Bilaspur	90,716	September 30th ...	7·8
Sambalpur	...	.....	...
Whole Province ...	300,701	October 15th ...	2·8

(4). *Relief-centres and Kitchens.*

140. Relief-centres, as already stated, were intended to serve a temporary necessity. As their name implies, they were places where distressed persons could collect, the stronger being drafted to works, the weaker given light work, and the weakest of all fed until they were able to do first the light work and finally the regular task of the larger relief-works. Their purpose is clearly explained in a Circular issued on the 11th December 1896 :—

General remarks regarding relief-centres.

These centres are primarily intended, not for the persons specified in Article 34 of the Famine Code, who are the proper objects of gratuitous relief in their villages, nor for the able-bodied poor, who are expected to find work at the relief-works established under the Code, but for the persons reduced by privation to a condition in which they are unable to earn a subsistence wage by work. Such a condition is commonly induced by the

disposition to wander, which is one of the first effects of severe scarcity; the further the distressed person goes from his village, the less is his chance of finding succour, and the more feeble and emaciated he becomes. Such persons, when they do not succumb to hunger, generally find their way to the head-quarters towns and the poor-houses established there. But the Code contemplates such poor-houses only at the head-quarters of each tahsil. The object of the relief-centres is to afford assistance to these wanderers at an earlier stage before they have gone far and become severely reduced, to give them sufficient gratuitous relief to restore their health, employing them, when possible, during the period of convalescence on light labour at small works, and when they are fully recovered, to pass them on to the large works, chiefly those under the management of Public Works Department Officers, where they will be treated according to Code rules. It is not forbidden to admit to relief at these relief-centres helpless persons such as those contemplated in Article 34 of the Code: on the contrary, if any such persons are found wandering within the circle of a relief-centre, they should be taken there and supported until they can be sent to their homes. But it is not for such that the relief-centres are primarily maintained. They are the proper objects of village-relief, arrangements for which should be set on foot as soon as possible in all tracts where severe distress has declared itself.

Relief-centres outside Jubbulpore Division.

141. Relief-centres were but sparingly resorted to outside the Jubbulpore Division and the Jagirs of Chhindwara, mainly because distress did not become intense before other forms of relief were provided. But more might have been done in this direction in Balaghat and Betul, where village-relief was not taken in hand sufficiently early. The system of village-relief described in Chanda (*supra*, paragraph 135) was also more akin to relief-centres than to the village-relief of the Famine Code. In Raipur and Bilaspur the few relief-centres were intended to take the place of poor-houses in distant parts of the district where proper supervision of a poor-house could not be secured. In all these districts, however, relief-centres played no very important part, and the number relieved at them was comparatively small.

Relief-centres in Jubbulpore Division.

142. In the Jubbulpore Division and the Jagirs of Chhindwara it was otherwise. In Saugor and Damoh much resort was not had to relief-centres; three or four were opened in isolated parts of each district under the management of patwaris and *mukaddams*, but they were closed as soon as village-relief began to be extended. In Jubbulpore, on the other hand, no less than 19 relief-centres were opened, and the number of persons who flocked to them became for a time unmanageably large (39,581 in the middle of January). As local works were organized and drafts made to works under the Public Works Department or to village-relief, several of these centres were gradually closed, and the numbers steadily fell from 18,000 in the middle of February to 5,300 in the middle of May. Ultimately only 9 were retained as combined hospitals and kitchens, and proved of great utility. For the management of the original centres patwaris and schoolmasters were the agency chiefly utilised, under the supervision of the Circle Relief Officers; but the combined rural hospitals and kitchens which succeeded them were each managed by a Hospital Assistant. The numbers relieved at these institutions fluctuated between 2,000 and 3,000 during the months of June and July, after which they were supplemented by the establishment of children's kitchens.

Arrangements in Jubbulpore.

Mandla.

In Mandla 17 relief-centres were established at the end of December, the object of which was partly to provide local works and partly to take the place of village-relief. These were managed by small local committees of malguzars, assisted by selected patwaris whose duty it was to keep the accounts and generally supervise the work done. During the open season the work required of the more able-bodied was tank-work, and when the rains broke they were employed on improving hill-paths. Some works of the former kind were useful, but the improvement of hill-paths was seldom of much benefit. In the absence of professional advice the alignments were often badly selected and the gradients too steep.

The Commissioner of Jubbulpore makes the following remarks regarding the Mandla relief-centres:—

Relief-centres were opened in the early days of the famine, and in view of the difficulty which would attend the systematic grant of village-relief, they were regarded to some extent as replacing it, and not, as in Jubbulpore, as a merely temporary

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expedient. Experience has shown that this was a mistake. Indeed the numbers relieved at these centres remained from January to June fairly constant at a little over 3,000, and it appears that the Deputy Commissioner placed a limit on the numbers to be controlled at each centre, which detracted of course very greatly from its efficiency as a substitute for village-relief.

Seoni.

In Seoni, again, relief-centres were on a different basis; advances were sent to each police station and out-post from which wanderers and others in need of relief could be fed. Twelve centres, worked by local committees, were opened during the early months of the famine, and continued during most of the hot weather; but these were gradually given up in favour of the centres under the Police, of which 17 to 19 continued during the hot weather and rains, being largely supplemented in August by children's kitchens. The centres in Seoni were thus practically arrangements for feeding wanderers, and did not involve the collection of any large number of people at the centre. The numbers relieved at them fluctuated between two and three hundred in the early months of the famine, but fell greatly during the hot weather and beginning of the rains.

Account by Mr. Ryves of relief-centres in Chhindwara Jagirs.

143. An interesting account of the relief-centres in the Chhindwara Jagirs is given by the Deputy Commissioner of Chhindwara, which shows very clearly the uses fulfilled by those institutions in that region. He writes:—

The Jagirs presented special difficulties in the way of gratuitous relief. With an area of 1,600 square miles, they contain not more than 20 villages where banias reside and supplies of grain can be obtained. The local resources of the villages in the interior had been depleted, and it is no exaggeration to say that even in the early stages of the famine, grain for food purposes was not procurable in more than half the villages of the tract. The difficulties were further enhanced by the absence of any Government Police, and the fact that the patwari staff was very limited, looking at the large area to be dealt with. Under such circumstances a money distribution, even if it could have been satisfactorily carried out, would have been of little benefit to the recipients, who were the old, blind, and infirm, and young children. Such persons could not be expected to trudge long distances over mountainous country to purchase their supplies, nor, on the other hand, could their able-bodied relatives, who were themselves destitute and starving, be trusted to apply the money properly for the benefit of those for whom it was designed. It was therefore decided to substitute for the system of village-to-village relief the distribution of food at certain selected centres to which supplies could be sent with comparatively little difficulty, and to provide shelters at those centres in which persons coming from a distance could live until the necessity for relief had passed. Fifteen such centres were selected and placed under the charge of three Circle Inspectors and the managers of the two Jagirs under the Court of Wards. A patwari was placed in charge of each centre as a distributing officer. The local bania was employed as a banker for the safe custody of cash and the supplies of provisions. Disbursements were made when required from the money in his hands, and grain obtained from him daily on indents. The centres were all started between the 27th December and the 15th January, at such places that they roughly divided the Jagirs into circles with a radius of ten miles.

It was originally proposed to distribute the uncooked grain equivalent of the minimum wage of the Famine Code, and to let the recipients cook it themselves; but it was at once found necessary to start kitchens at each centre and to distribute cooked food to those who required it. Many of the persons brought were unable by reason of old age, infirmity, or infancy to cook for themselves. Others had no utensils in which to cook their food. Others again arrived in a state of physical weakness which made it necessary that they should be treated as hospital patients and fed on special diet. At the same time the shelters grew with the growing number of residents, and a conservancy staff became necessary. Recipients of relief were of four classes, according as they resided permanently at the centre, or merely came at meal times, and according as they received cooked or uncooked food. The sanitary arrangements were carefully supervised by the Civil Surgeon. A latrine on the dry-earth system, a small hospital, and a cholera shed were provided in each case for the benefit of resident paupers, and they were all connected by *dhooly* service with the hospitals at the three principal centres. The Circle Inspector, besides acting as disbursing officer, had to be constantly on tour in his circle and see that no emaciated persons were allowed to remain in their villages. That the Gonds, Korkus, and Bharias viewed these measures at first with suspicion was to be expected. It was believed by some that the children fed at the centres would be kidnapped and by some subtle process of distillation converted into an European drug. Others thought of human sacrifices. The Muási Korkus of the Pachmarhi Jagir for some time adhered to the belief that Government had some large engineering project in view, and that "all persons for whom there

seemed to be no use" were being collected and fattened preparatory to a general holocaust. Even as late as September the removal of some orphans to Chhindwara caused a stampede, which temporarily emptied one of the centres. The most civilized suspected that they would be sent to Assam. These suspicions at first deterred many persons from coming to these centres, but constant persuasion on the part of the Famine Officers, and to a very great extent the interest taken by the Jagirdars in the organization of relief, overcame such scruples. As soon as the nature of the relief became known, numbers rose steadily, the highest figure reached being 2,378, or 3½ per cent. on the population of the Jagirs. The total number of persons admitted between the 1st January and the 15th November 1897 was 8,006, of whom 6,175 were inhabitants of the Jagirs, 535 of the rest of the district, 991 wanderers from Hoshangabad and Narsinghpur, and 208 waifs and strays from other districts of the Central Provinces. From Native States (principally Bhopal) there were 76; and 21 were from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.

Nine hundred and twenty-four persons were sent to be treated at the hospitals, and the total number who died in all the centres or hospitals, from the beginning to the end, was 467, a rate of 58 *per mille per annum* on admissions. The health of the inmates of these centres and of the children in particular was much superior to that of the inmates of the Chhindwara poor-house, a fact which I attribute to the absence of confinement.

Summary of relief-centres.

144. It will thus be seen that relief-centres were managed on different systems in different districts. They ranged from modified poor-houses to mere places where starving wanderers could be fed and sent on their way: from a species of local work with gratuitous relief annexed, as in Mandla, to the admirably organized relief institutions described by the Deputy Commissioner of Chhindwara. That they were so diverse in various parts of the Province is principally due to differences in the nature of the country and the character of the people, to the extent to which wandering took place, and the period at which distress developed. That they are useful as a temporary expedient to meet a rapid growth of distress is shown by the experience of Jubbulpore; and that they are an appropriate form of relief in wild tracts where grain shops are few and far between is abundantly proved by the case of Chhindwara. The place which relief-centres should fill in the administration of famine relief is a point to be defined and explained in a revision of the Famine Code.

Children's kitchens.

Instructions as to the management of children's kitchens.

145. The advisability of opening kitchens for feeding children if need was felt for them was impressed on local officers at an early stage of the famine (January 15th), and the resort to them as distress in villages increased was enjoined in the Circular of the 2nd July already quoted. But except in connection with dependents on relief works no great extension of kitchens took place until the middle of the rains (when village-relief was also extended), and they proved most useful in the autumn months, when labourers could not always earn enough for the support of their children, and before the autumn crops were ready for reaping. The Code (Appendix V) contains some rules for their management, borrowed from Madras; but these proved too elaborate for general adoption. In March, as already mentioned (*supra*, paragraph 118), Mr. L. K. Laurie drew up revised rules for kitchens in connection with works under the Public Works Department. But the extension of kitchens to villages on a large scale was effected under much simpler rules, devised by Mr. Fuller, which, after being considered at a Conference held at Jubbulpore on the 2nd August, were circulated as a general model to other Commissioners on the 13th of that month. Under these rules the kitchens were to be managed either by malguzars, schoolmasters, or Police. Nothing elaborate was required. A shed for cooking, and another to shelter the children who were waiting, some brass or iron cooking utensils, and a stock of rice and *dal* (pulse), were all that was necessary. The food to be given was a mixture of rice and *dal* (*khichri*) boiled together to the consistency of rice pudding, with salt and a little *ghee* or oil added. The standard measure was to be a tin vessel holding the cooked equivalent of 6 oz.—that is to say about 18 oz. The rations were to be :—

For an adult male	...	... 3	of these measures.
„ „ female	...	... 2⅔	„ „
„ children	...	... 2½	to 1, according to age.

Two chief rules were to be followed: first, that no children should be allowed to live at the kitchen, its use being restricted to those who came each day from their homes; and second, that every child or person attending the kitchen should have a tin ticket hung round the neck by a string. Food need not be given as a matter of course to all who applied. Children in good condition might be referred to their Circle Officer for a ticket. But children who were thin and emaciated were to be admitted and given a ticket immediately on application. A small allowance was to be made for writing up the accounts and two simple forms of attendance registers, and the establishment was to consist of a cook—or two cooks if the numbers exceeded 300—and a water-carrier.

Extension of kitchens in the Jubbulpore Division.

146. These rules were put in force in the Jubbulpore Division, and were generally followed elsewhere; but with the need for rapid extension and the various kinds of agency employed—malguzars, police, schoolmasters, school committees, &c.—local deviations must have been numerous. The number of kitchens eventually opened in the various districts of the Province is shown in the following table:—

Jubbulpore Division.		Nerbudda Division.		Nagpur Division.		Chhattisgarh Division.	
Saugor ...	49	Narsinghpur ...	44	Wardha ...	1	Raipur ..	49
Damoh ...	40	Hoshangabad ...	26	Nagpur ...	28	Bilaspur ...	47
Jubbulpore ...	59	Nimar ...	18	Chanda ...	29		
Mandla ...	58	Betul ...	22	Bhandara ...	82		
Seoni ...	59	Chhindwara ...	14	Balaghat ...	47		
Total ...	265		124		187		96
			672				

Most of these kitchens were opened in August and continued to the close of the famine, generally reaching their maximum numbers in October just before the reaping of the autumn crops. But in Mandla this, like village relief, was less quickly organized, and it was not until September that any appreciable number were in working order. The District Officers of the Jubbulpore Division are unanimous as to the great value of these kitchens. The Deputy Commissioner of Jubbulpore states that "they elicited much admiration from the people," and the Deputy Commissioner of Seoni, of whose 59 kitchens all but five were administered by private agency, considers that they are the "only form of relief effectual in checking child mortality in a famine"; he adds that the malguzars took great pride in the management of their kitchens.

Experience of the Nerbudda Division as to kitchens.

147. In the Nerbudda Division the experience of kitchens was not quite so favourable. The Commissioner states that they were only useful in towns and large villages, and that in the rains parents would not send their children from any distance on account of difficulties of communication, and the risk to the children of crossing streams in the rains. He adds that as village relief doles were distributed daily, there was no risk of parents squandering the doles and misapplying the children's share. His remarks about the difficulties of travel do not, however, apply to the autumn months, October and November, when this form of relief was found most useful elsewhere; and as there were 44 kitchens opened in Narsinghpur, it would not appear that there were any insuperable objections to a more general use of these institutions in other districts of the Division. It may be remarked, however, that in Chhindwara the most distressed area, the Jagirs, was already provided for by the relief-centres, while in Nimar distress was not acute. A greater extension in Betul would have been most beneficial. The Deputy Commissioner of Chhindwara

admits the great benefit to the health of the children resulting from the establishment of a kitchen, but adds that they were seldom resorted to by children outside the village where the kitchen was situated. Parents were too busily engaged to bring them, and they seldom came of themselves.

Nagpur Division.

148. The experience of the Nagpur Division was much in favour of kitchens, though here also difficulty was experienced in inducing children to come from any distance. In Wardha hardly anything was done in this direction, but both in Nagpur and Chanda they were extended with useful results in the autumn. In Bhandara kitchens of the kind had been opened at police station-houses and outposts early in the famine, but they were largely increased in the rains with most beneficial effect. The Deputy Commissioner of Balaghat also warmly commends them, and regrets that they were not introduced at an earlier stage.

Chhattisgarh.

In Chhattisgarh the number of kitchens was very small in proportion to the large area affected. The Deputy Commissioner of Raipur notes a tendency for paupers to accumulate at kitchens which requires to be checked, or the kitchen degenerates into an ill-organized poor-house. The Deputy Commissioner of Bilaspur speaks of the excellent results of kitchen relief. On the whole experience is greatly in favour of an early extension of this form of assistance, and it is to be regretted that more was not done in this direction in the various districts to which reference has been made.

General arrangements for relief of starving wanderers.

149. A word of reference is appropriate at this stage to the relief afforded to wanderers. To a large extent these were caught by the network of relief institutions spread over the face of the country; and relief centres and kitchens were of especial benefit to these poor people. But, apart from established relief centres and kitchens, the officers in charge of police stations had instructions to feed and forward such wanderers either to works or poor-houses according to their condition, and advances were freely utilised for this purpose. In Bilaspur, when the condition of the people was at its worst, a regular police patrol was established, at the instance of Mr. Low, who was in charge of the Mungeli Tahsil, to collect all such persons and forward them on to places where they could be relieved. A staff of carriers with litters was engaged, and many whose condition was bad were carried in carts to the nearest poor-house. The system was extended to other roads and was the means of saving many lives. No precise details are available of the number of wanderers relieved; some have no doubt been included in the numbers shown as dealt with at relief centres, but under the head "Migration" in Chapter II it has been mentioned that over 6,000 persons were thus relieved in Seoni, and in that district the number of wanderers was not as large as in some others.

Numbers at relief-centres and kitchens.

150. The number of persons relieved at relief centres may best be judged of by the returns of the beginning of 1897, and that of those relieved at kitchens by the returns of August, September and October:—

Relief Centres.

Date.	Jubbulpore Division.	Whole Province.
15th January	43,437	45,426
28th February	22,589	27,085
15th May	8,885	11,650
15th July	6,303	11,418

For the combined relief given by relief-centres and kitchens (the numbers at the former being important only in the case of Mandla and Chhindwara), the following statement will indicate the extent to which this form of relief was used in each district in the rains and autumn :—

District.	Maximum number relieved at kitchens and centres in the rains.	Date of maximum.	Percentage on total relieved.
Saugor	6,576	October 15th ...	17·7
Damoh	2,565	September 15th ...	7·8
Jubbulpore	8,408	„ 30th ...	14·3
Mandla	6,135	„ 15th ...	16·6
Seoni	3 858	„ 30th ...	19·9
Narsinghpur	1,619	October 31st ...	12·7
Hoshangabad	490	November 15th ...	5·8
Nimar	323	October 15th ...	9·0
Betul	1,941	„ „ ...	7·7
Chhindwara	3,906	„ „ ...	16·6
Nagpur	3,463	November 15th ...	31·8
Chanda	1,606	October 31st ...	15·0
Bhandara	3,725	„ 15th ...	10·4
Balaghat	1,247	„ „ ...	3·2
Raipur	4,261	„ „ ...	4·9
Bilaspur	5,753	„ „ ...	4·2
Whole Province	51,986	„ „ ...	8·9

C.—Famine allowances to Government Officials, Patwaris and Kotwars.

Allowances to Government officials.

151. Besides the direct relief given to the general population in the several ways described above, it was necessary to assist low-paid Government officials, as well as *patwáris* (village accountants) and *kotwárs* (village watchmen). Compensation for dearness of grain, calculated under the ordinary rules contained in the Civil Account Code, Article 72, was given to all Government officials whose pay was less than Rs. 16 per mensem, at the rate of Re. 1 or Rs. 1-8 a month according as the price of the staple grain fell below 12 or 10 seers to the rupee as the case might be.

The total amount expended in these allowances during the year was as follows :—

	Rs.
Public Works Department ...	4,920
Forest Department ...	35,842
Other Civil Departments ...	1,90,480
Total ...	2,31,242

Allowances to *Patwáris*.

152. *Patwáris* were not entitled to this concession under the rules of the Account Code, but, in view of the importance of the functions which they performed, it was found necessary to give them allowances wherever—

(*a*) their remuneration consisted largely of local dues, and distress was so severe as to make it likely that they would not be able to collect much; or

(*b*) their salaries, though paid from the Treasury, were specially low.

Under the first head allowances were given in Jubbulpore, Saugor, Damoh, Hoshangabad and Narsinghpur. Under the second allowances were given in Bilaspur; and in Raipur, as the *patwáris* had already been given grain compensation allowances by the Deputy Commissioner, the amounts disbursed were permitted to stand in lieu of extra salary. These concessions were paid out of the balances of the Patwári Fund: the exact expenditure which they entailed has not been stated.

In the remaining districts either the cash salaries were considered sufficient, or the crop failure was not so great as to preclude the recovery of a substantial portion of the local dues.

Village watchmen.

153. The case of the *kotwárs* or village watchmen was on a different footing. These useful but humble village servants are entirely remunerated by local dues in the shape either of cash, grain, or land. In the distressed districts it was impossible for them to subsist without help; and it was in these very districts that the presence of the *kotwárs* in their villages during the famine was most essential. It was the *kotwárs* who were charged with the duty of bringing the cases of distressed persons or wanderers to the notice of the *mukaddams* and relief officers of every grade; and, in addition, the reporting of crime and of the weekly births and deaths at the Police stations devolves entirely upon them. It was essential that these duties should be regularly performed, and that the *kotwár* should not be compelled by the pressure of want to leave his village. Allowances, varying from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 a month, were therefore paid to a certain number of *kotwárs* through the police in all districts except Nimar, Chanda, Betul, Chhindwara, Wardha, Nagpur and Sambalpur. In Betul and Chanda indigent *kotwárs* were put on the village-relief lists. Some *kotwárs* have other resources, and exceptions were made, but the number of these was small. *Kotwárs* in villages where the spring crops were good, as in the level portion of Jubbulpore, were not assisted.

The following is a statement of the allowances made:—

Jubbulpore Division.		Nerbudda Division.		Nagpur Division.		Chhattisgarh Division.	
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
Saugor ...	20,260	Narsinghpur ...	10,266	Bhandara ...	13,482	Raipur ...	24,364
Damoh ...	11,948	Hoshangabad ...	16,443	Balaghat ...	8,460	Bilaspur ...	17,646
Jubbulpore ...	22,837						
Mandla ...	21,337						
Seoni ...	14,439						
Total ..	90,820	Total ...	26,709	Total ...	21,942	Total ...	42,010

The total expenditure under this head was therefore Rs. 1,81,482; but it was money well laid out and benefited a deserving class of public servants. About 16,000 *kotwárs* were assisted in this manner.

D.—Private Charity.

154. Any account of the administration of Famine Relief in the Central Provinces during the year 1897 would be incomplete which did not acknowledge the enormous assistance rendered by the operations of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund. These operations are described in detail in the Report written by the able and devoted Honorary Secretary to the Provincial Committee, Rai Bahadur B. K. Bose, C. I. E., and it is unnecessary here to do more than summarise them. The movement began in the Province with a public meeting held at Nagpur on the 13th February under the presidency of the Chief Commissioner. A Provincial Committee was appointed with the Judicial Commissioner as Chairman, and by the 4th April District Committees were at work in every district except Sambalpur. These Committees consisted mainly of non-officials, but in most cases the Deputy Commissioner or some other official was elected Chairman, and the Committees worked everywhere in the closest touch with the District Officers. The objects which the Committees set before themselves here, as in other parts of India, were:—

The Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund.

(1) the provision of special comforts for the suffering and the aged, the children, and all who were in urgent need of something more than the bare subsistence which is all that the State is pledged to provide;

(2) the maintenance of orphans;

(3) the relief of those poor but respectable persons who, being unable to appear in public, will not apply for the relief offered by the Government;

(4) the restoration to their original position, when acute distress was subsiding, of those who had lost their all in the struggle, and giving them a fresh start in life.

In the allotment of funds the Central Committee dealt with the Central Provinces in a spirit of the most splendid liberality. Recognizing from the first, and more clearly after the visit to the Province in May of Mr. H. E. M. James, the Vice-Chairman and Honorary Secretary, the extreme severity of the distress prevailing here, and the poverty of the classes affected, as well as the exhaustion of local resources due to the demands on private charity during the previous years of harvest failure and consequent pressure, they allotted during the famine the magnificent sum of Rs. 33,07,192, a proportion considerably larger than that to which the Province would have been entitled on a strict distribution according to area, population, or numbers on relief; and since the close of the famine they have added to this a donation of 3 lakhs, to be expended on the maintenance of famine orphans. The total sum allotted thus exceeded 36 lakhs, and if to this be added the local receipts, amounting to Rs. 75,895, and the proceeds of certain donations in kind, the grand total available for charitable expenditure reached Rs. 37,10,483.

Allotment of funds to the Central Provinces by the Central Committee.

Nearly 80 per cent. of this sum was spent on the fourth object, the restoration to their original position in life of those whom the famine had left without resources, and in the Central Provinces, an almost purely agricultural country, this naturally took the form of gifts of seed-grain and cattle, or more usually of money for their purchase, to broken-down tenants. "*Khawái*" or "*porga*," subsistence allowance to cover the period between sowing and harvest, was also freely given. The greatest care was taken to prevent any overlapping of the Charitable Fund distribution and the Government *takávi* advances, and in order to secure this object the actual distribution was almost everywhere placed in the hands of the Famine Relief Officers. The Government outlay on *takávi*, or expenditure in advances for seed-grain and bullocks, rose to the unprecedentedly high figure of 15¾ lakhs, but the amount spent in charity was nearly twice this sum. The largest amounts were spent in Jubbulpore (Rs. 3,67,692) and Balaghat (Rs. 3,25,489) and it is estimated that in the latter district from 30,000 to 40,000 acres, out of a nominal acreage of 200,000, were sown by means of the help so afforded,—a fact which

Help to agriculturists and artizans.

clearly indicates the immense value of the services rendered by the Fund both to the individual recipients and to the country generally.

Distribution of clothes and blankets.

Next to the help given to struggling agriculturists, the most useful of the Charitable Fund operations was the distribution of clothes and blankets to relief workers and persons on gratuitous relief in their homes. The approach of the cold weather, though it brought relief in the form of a bumper *kharif* harvest, severely tried constitutions lowered by long-continued privation; large classes of the population in this country, and especially among the aborigines, use very little clothing, and in their weakened condition were greatly exposed to the dangers of chill; and the timely distribution of warm clothing undoubtedly saved many lives.

Cheap grain shops.

Another form of relief, which was most popular, and is reported to have been everywhere most successful, was the opening of cheap grain shops, at which the respectable poor were allowed to purchase food at rates below the market price. This relief reached a class of people who were as severely pressed by the famine as the poorest labourer, but who nevertheless were precluded by their social position from taking advantage either of the Government relief works or of open charity.

Relief to *parda-nishin* women and respectable persons.

Gratuitous relief by doles of money and clothes to *parda-nishin* ladies, and other persons whose social position forbade their openly applying for aid, was given only in the large towns and to a limited extent. Such persons are much less numerous in this Province than in other territories, the seats of former sovereignty, where the descendents of ancient families, now sunk in poverty, cling to the sites of vanished power. The distribution was perforce left largely to the discretion of individuals or of small sub-committees. Much help was doubtless given in this way to really deserving persons, and the position and character of the agents employed afford a guarantee that selections were properly made; but it is a method of relief which is obviously difficult to control, and of which the benefits must be taken on trust.

Maintenance of orphans.

The maintenance of orphans is a matter which properly falls to be dealt with after the close of a famine. Throughout the famine, indeed, allotments were made from the Charitable Fund for clothes and extra comforts to orphans as to other inmates of poor-houses, and some subsidies were paid to private institutions. But the really important matter is the provision, after the close of the famine, for the bringing up in a decent way of life of the residue of children who are not claimed by parents or relatives, and cannot be planted out in the village communities to which they belong. This has been provided for by the munificent grant of 3 lakhs made by the Central Committee, and the final arrangements for the distribution of this Fund, among the institutions to which famine orphans have been made over, are now being carried out.

General result of charity administered by the Fund.

155. In closing his Report on the administration of the Fund, the Honorary Secretary says that "the good the Fund has done is simply incalculable." This is no more than the truth. The gifts of clothes and blankets distributed, the grain sold at the cheap shops, and the money doles to the respectable poor, can be exhibited statistically, and these alone show a vast amount of relief of suffering and distress, much of which must under any system of Government famine relief have been impossible. In coming to the rescue of a tenantry broken and disheartened by four successive years of accumulating troubles the Fund has done much to mitigate the worst effects of the famine, and has carried more than one district of the Province over a crisis which, without its aid, would have ended in widespread ruin. These are great services. The officers charged with the administration of the Province, and those engaged in the work of famine relief, cannot fail to be grateful for the splendid generosity which made such results possible. Whether the people are equally grateful is a question that is answered in many different ways by those who have had the best opportunities of judging. It is said that in some cases the gifts were received with "stolid indifference;" in others that the recipients threw themselves at the feet of the famine relief officers and invoked blessings on their heads. The indifference, however, was manifested chiefly in

the early part of the famine; the ignorance and mistrust which formed one of the chief difficulties in the way of all famine relief measures operated in this instance also; and in the acutest stage of a famine, when life has become a daily struggle for existence, little room is left for the play of the finer feelings. As the famine subsided, and as the people came to understand the true character of the Fund, there was no lack of gratitude; the diaries of District Officers which have come in since the close of the famine are full of instances. To quote the Honorary Secretary's Report once more:—

> The tens of thousands who have benefited by the Fund have carried with them the message of good will and sympathy embodied in it to a vast number of homes and to the remotest corners of the Province.

The Indian Famine Charitable Fund has saved many lives and alleviated much suffering; it has given fresh hope and heart to thousands of struggling cultivators, and saved large tracts of land from ruin and desolation; but it is in this message of good will and sympathy from the rulers to the ruled,—in the clearing away of misconceptions and the silencing of calumnies, that it has achieved a work which it was as much beyond the power of the Government to accomplish as it is likely to be of lasting benefit both to the people and to those who rule over them.

Receipts and Expenditure of the Charitable Fund.

156. The following is a statement of the total receipts and expenditure of the Fund in the Central Provinces between February 1897 and the end of January 1898, exclusive of the grant of 3 lakhs of rupees for orphans, which was made by the Central Committee to the Local Administration direct, the Provincial Committee having by that time dissolved:—

Receipts.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Received from the Central Committee ...	33 07,191	12	0
Local subscriptions and other receipts ...	1,03,291	0	10
Total ...	34,10 482	12	10

Expenditure.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Under Objects I and II jointly..	2,15,775	3	0
Under Object II ...	12,857	0	1
„ „ III ...	1.53 285	7	7
„ „ IV ...	29 42,791	15	7
Total ...	33 24,709	10	3
Miscellaneous expenditure ...	20 453	10	9
Total expenditure ...	33 45,163	5	0
Closing balance ...	65,319	7	10
Grand Total ...	34 10,482	12	10

Of the balance, Rs. 65,319, here shown, a large proportion has since been spent by the Local Committees in whose hands it was; and it is expected that between Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 20,000 will eventually be refunded to the account of the Central Committee.

The statement appended, furnished by the Honorary Secretary to the Provincial Committee, shows how the total expenditure under the four heads has been distributed between the several districts of the Province and the Feudatory States of Chhattisgarh:—

Districts.	Under Objects I and II.	Under Object II.	Under Object III.	Under Object IV.	Total.
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Nagpur ...	6,344 0 10	...	26,272 5 8	62 902 8 0	95,518 14 6
Bhandara ...	7,910 14 2	1,925 12 7	21,522 12 10	1,32,467 0 0	1,63,826 7 7
Chanda ...	17,803 8 2	...	1,655 8 6	36,137 15 7	55,597 0 3
Wardha ...	468 11 0	...	8,881 9 0	24,331 0 0	33,681 4 0
Balaghat ...	6,826 4 2	...	1,005 12 0	3,25,489 11 0	3 33,321 11 2
Raipur ...	14,139 3 2	686 14 2	10,794 2 7	2,84,301 12 10	3,09,922 0 9
Bilaspur ...	23,414 9 10	650 0 0	1,750 0 0	2,78,268 14 0	3,04,083 7 10

Districts.	Under Objects I and II.	Under Object II.	Under Object III.	Under Object IV.	Total.
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Jubbulpore ...	23,122 3 9	5,252 0 0	29,357 0 6	3,67,692 7 0	4,25,423 11 3
Saugor ...	14,272 14 0	177 4 2	9,196 0 0	2,83,476 10 9	3,07,122 12 11
Damoh ...	13 177 5 1	...	350 0 0	2,49,582 0 0	2,63,109 5 1
Mandla ...	9,022 7 7	...	12,136 4 1	1,94,432 10 2	2,15,591 5 10
Seoni ...	19,222 14 11	...	2,293 4 6	1,10,943 2 7	1,32,459 6 0
Hoshangabad ...	12 220 7 10	...	11,551 15 5	2,14,691 9 3	2,38,464 0 6
Chhindwara ...	25.497 14 8	...	3,589 0 0	65,831 12 0	94,918 10 8
Narsinghpur ...	4,733 13 6	2,000 0 0	3,318 8 3	1,90,722 12 0	2,00 775 1 9
Betul ...	4,825 8 3	...	2,129 14 9	54,212 5 3	61,167 12 3
Nimar ...	7,365 0 1	150 0 0	4,497 1 0	39,359 13 7	51,371 14 8
Feudatory States of Chhattisgarh ...	4,791 7 3	890 1 2	1,370 8 0	27,947 15 7	35,000 0 0
District Totals ...	2,15 159 4 3	11,732 0 1	1,51,671 11 1	29,42,791 15 7	33,21,354 15 0
Executive Committee ...	615 14 9	1,125 0 0	1,613 12 6	.....	3,354 11 3
GRAND TOTAL ...	2,15,775 3 0	12,857 0 1	1,53,285 7 7	29,42,791 15 7	33,24,709 10 3

It will be seen that the districts which received the largest share of the amount allotted were Jubbulpore ($4\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs), Balaghat ($3\frac{1}{3}$ lakhs), Raipur, Saugor, Bilaspur (over 3 lakhs), Damoh ($2\frac{2}{3}$ lakhs), Hoshangabad ($2\frac{1}{3}$ lakhs), Mandla and Narsinghpur (over 2 lakhs). These were the districts which, in view of the extent and severity of the distress, most required assistance, and these figures afford evidence that the distribution of their resources by the Provincial Committee was effected with much care and discrimination. The only district the needs of which might, if more fully represented by the local authorities, have secured a larger allotment is Betul. Here distress developed rather suddenly late in the year, and was not sufficiently foreseen and provided for by the District Officer, who failed to apply in time for the assistance which would have been valuable to the distressed population.

Number of persons relieved.

157. The accounts available up to the time of writing do not show completely the number of persons who received assistance from the Fund, as they (so far as this matter is concerned) have been made up only till the end of October 1897: much of the distribution of clothes and blankets took place after that date, during the cold weather of 1897-98. The following are the figures:—

Objects I and II (extra comforts and orphans)—		
Recipients of clothes and blankets	...	137,433
Do. extra comforts	...	115,784
Orphans supported	...	4,260
Object III (respectable poor)—		
Recipients of clothes	...	5,304
Do. doles of cash or grain	...	35,389
Relieved by cheap grain shops	...	23,693
Object IV (restoration of means of livelihood)—		
Agriculturists	...	324,424
Others	...	4,045
Grand Total	...	650,332

As already observed, the permanent provision for orphans falls to be made (from the grant allotted for the purpose) after the conclusion of the famine. While the famine lasted the responsibility for the maintenance of orphan children, like that of other destitute persons, lay with the Government, and the great majority of them were accommodated in Government orphanages attached to poor-houses. Here they received, in common with other destitute persons, their share of the extra comforts distributed under Head I. Some orphans, however, were already in the hands of charitable agencies, the managers of which placed their resources at the disposal of the Fund; and in consideration of this the Fund met the cost of the maintenance of these children; this explains the appearance of 4,260 orphans as recipients in the account.

Of the 324,424 agriculturists aided, the following districts exhibit the largest figures :—

Balaghat	...	68,265
Raipur	...	46,842
Jubbulpore	...	35,210
Bilaspur	...	21,315
Chhattisgarh Feudatories	...	21,484
Seoni	...	19,249
Damoh	...	18,396
Saugor	...	16,546
Narsinghpur	...	15,733
Mandla	...	14,931

It will be seen that there were considerable differences under this head in different districts. The amount allotted was in some utilised in affording subsistence (*porga* or *khawdi*) between seed time and harvest to tenants who could not leave their fields to attend relief-works: in others bullocks were provided, involving payment of a larger sum: in others small grants for seed were given. Again, there are great differences in the cost of the seed required for a particular crop: rice and wheat cost much to sow, while the millets, *sesamum*, and linseed can be sown over a large area for very little. For these reasons it would serve no useful purpose to analyse these figures very strictly. They must, moreover, be taken in conjunction with those showing the assistance given by Government in the shape of *takávi* loans (*infra*, paragraph 171).

Of the 4,045 persons other than agriculturists shown as receiving assistance 3,342 were in Raipur, and appear to have been chiefly weavers and coppersmiths.

Other forms of private charity.

158. Apart from this great organized work of charity, carried out with the magnificent resources received from outside, there was, both prior to the establishment of the Provincial Committee of the Indian Famine Charitable Relief Fund in February 1897 and during the continuance of its operations, a great deal of charitable help afforded to the poor from private sources. During the years of pressure which preceded the famine, and especially during the year 1896, local private charity was active. In the affected districts private poor-houses were maintained, in some with the aid of small grants from Municipal funds; and the piety of wealthy members of the community found satisfaction, as usual, in the distribution of food to crowds of beggars assembled round their doors. This latter form of relief, as was long ago pointed out by the Famine Commissioners (Report, Part I, paragraph 187), is however apt to produce greater evils than it cures, and was discouraged as the famine increased in severity, charitable persons being invited instead to dispense their alms by contributing them to the Local Charitable Fund Committees for expenditure in the organized manner thereby provided. In several districts where the distress was less severe than in the main famine area, especially in Nagpur and Wardha, malguzars maintained kitchens, where cooked food was distributed to the village poor; and these institutions were of great value.

159. But the main agencies (apart from the Charitable Fund) for the distribution of charitable relief on a considerable scale were the various missionary bodies. It was hoped, when the Fund was constituted in February 1897, that these societies would amalgamate their resources with it, and, leaving to Government the provision for the direct saving of life, would devote themselves to adding to the subsidiary forms of assistance recognized as suitable for private effort. To a large extent, indeed, this was done. But, as might perhaps have been expected, many of the missionary agencies preferred to continue direct assistance to the poor, especially to children. Complete accounts of the operations of these societies have not reached the Chief Commissioner; but he is aware that much good work was done. One of the Missions whose operations were most extensive was the Gond Mission of the Church Missionary Society, working in Mandla. Their report shows that, with two head-quarter stations, they had relief-work and food distribution at ten centres, and afforded wages for work or a dole of food to 423,273 day-units. Another body which administered large sums in private charity was the Friends' Foreign Mission, with head-quarters at Hoshangabad. Rupees 49,000 are said to have been given by this Society in relief of distress, of which Rs. 16,000 was distributed to broken down cultivators, and a considerable sum was spent on a private relief work. The American Christian Mission in Bilaspur, Damoh, and Harda in the Hoshangabad District, also spent much money in charitable relief. And the American Methodist Episcopalian Mission of Jubbulpore did a great work in distributing a large cargo of grain received from America, besides succouring a number of orphans of both sexes. The relief of orphans was also the peculiar work of the Roman Catholic Mission at Nagpur, the Swedish Lutheran Missions at Saugor, Chhindwara and Betul, and the Scottish Episcopalian Mission at Chanda. The (German) American Lutheran Mission in the Raipur District (head-quarters Bisrámpur) also did much work in providing employment for persons in need of relief. On the whole, the part played by Missions throughout the famine proved a valuable accessory to the Government relief: occasionally the charity administered was not as discriminating as it might have been; but such cases were the exception, and it cannot be doubted that mission funds relieved much suffering, and rescued many—especially orphan children—from the danger of death.

Missionary bodies.

E.—Indirect means of Relief.

160. Hitherto the history of famine operations has dealt with direct relief in payment of wages, gifts or doles to people who would otherwise have starved. Indirect measures no less valuable in their several ways consisted of—

Indirect relief.

(i) Suspensions of land revenue.

(ii) Suspensions of forest dues.

(iii) Loans to agriculturists for seed and bullocks.

(iv) Arrangements for the supply of grain.

(*i*).—*Suspensions of Land Revenue and Cesses payable on Land Revenue.*

161. In the statement with which Chapter I concludes it was shown that the land revenue concessions in the Jubbulpore Division, during the years immediately preceding the famine, amounted to the following sums:—

Past remissions and arrears at commencement of the famine.

		Rs.
Remitted altogether	...	9,23,769
Suspended ...	...	6,35,226
Total	...	15,58,995

By the 1st October 1896 those figures had somewhat changed; of the suspensions, Rs. 40,000 had been remitted, and the total remissions (in the districts of Damoh and Saugor) stood at Rs. 9,63,362; while the remaining suspensions, partly by recoveries and partly by omission to record formal orders of suspension, had fallen to Rs. 4,92,108. Besides these, there were unsuspended arrears on the 1st October 1896, amounting to Rs. 3,77,446. Thus at the commencement of the famine proper, excluding the large sums, nearly 10 lakhs, which had been wiped off the revenue demand, the arrears outstanding, suspended and unsuspended, amounted to Rs. 8,69,554.

Total demand of Revenue year 1896-97.

162. The Revenue year of the Province runs from the 1st October to the 30th September, and the two instalments in which the land revenue (including the cesses payable on the revenue) is paid in are due respectively in February or March for that leviable on the *kharif* or autumn harvest, and in May or June for that leviable on the *rabi* or spring harvest. The proportion forming the *kharif* or *rabi* instalment varies in each district according to the cropping. The total demand on account of the *kharif* instalment (due in February and March 1897) in the Revenue year 1896-97 was Rs. 39,46,723, consisting of Rs. 36,19,335 Land Revenue and Rs. 3,27,388 cesses; and the total demand an account of the *rabi* instalment, due in May-June, was Rs. 50,81,199, consisting of Rs. 46,38,306 land revenue and Rs. 4,42,893 cesses. Thus the total demand of the year under Land Revenue and Provincial rates taken together was Rs. 90,27,922.

Amount remitted and suspended in 1896-97.

Of this sum Rs. 4,40,253 were remitted during the year 1896-97, and Rs. 26,52,382 were suspended, a total of Rs. 30,92,635. The Government thus forewent, permanently or temporarily, no less than one-third of the whole provincial demand; while of the remainder much, though not formally suspended, remained unrealised in view of the poverty of the harvests.

The general principle in such cases is to suspend freely, but to remit sparingly. Our settlements are based upon the principle that the demand should be one which can be easily paid on an average of years; and therefore it is not ordinarily necessary to forego it entirely even though the crops of a whole year prove a failure. The only district where almost entire remission was at once granted was Damoh, which had suffered from a succession of crushing disasters, and where it would have been inexpedient to hamper recovery in the future by a load of debt. In the remaining districts the measure adopted was suspension, greater or less according to the necessities of the case, pending further consideration in the future. In the Nagpur Division no concessions were found necessary except in the districts of Balaghat and Bhandara. In the former it was decided, in view of the series of disastrous failures and the general distress, to suspend the whole revenue of the year; in the latter, where failure and distress were more partial, only Rs. 74,303 were suspended out of a demand of Rs. 4,41,148.

In the Jubbulpore Division (excluding Damoh, already dealt with above) the following proportions of the demand on account of Land Revenue and Cesses were suspended:—

	Per cent.
Saugor	83
Jubbulpore	32
Mandla	58
Seoni	52

This was the area where, taken as a whole, the crop failures for a series of years had been most persistent and disastrous. In Jubbulpore, it must be remembered, the richer portion of the district, called the *Haveli*, had not had bad crops, and realised very high prices from the harvest it reaped.

In the Nerbudda Division suspensions were large only in Narsinghpur and Hoshangabad. In the former district the whole of the *rabi* instalment, Rs. 4,50,259, or 66 per cent. of the year's demand, was suspended; in the latter Rs. 4,30,144, or 52 per cent. of the demand. In both the failure of 1896-97 had followed upon a succession of unfavourable years. In Chhindwara only Rs. 10,338 were suspended out of a demand of a little more than three lakhs; the

most severely distressed part of this district, the *Jagirs*, pays no revenue except a nominal quit-rent, and the richer portions of the district escaped serious failure. In Nimar also the suspensions were trifling. In Betul the Deputy Commissioner was given authority to suspend up to Rs. 10,000, but he actually suspended only Rs. 1,152; the land revenue demand in Betul, which is now undergoing revision, is extremely light.

In Chhattisgarh there were no suspensions in Sambalpur. In Raipur Rs. 2,66,833, or 26 per cent. of the demand, was suspended, and in Bilaspur Rs. 3,06,646, or almost exactly one-half of the year's demand. In Raipur the previous years had not been unfavourable, and there was a rich tract in the south of the district which had had fair crops, and made much money by export of rice.

All the concessions made to the malguzars or revenue payers were accompanied by the condition that equivalent concessions were to be made by them to their tenants. The latter were thus, in the case of remissions, relieved altogether, and in the case of suspensions, relieved temporarily, of the obligation to pay rent, and were accordingly able to devote such crops as their land produced to the support of themselves and their families, and to give employment to the labourers dependent on them.

Conversion of suspensions of 1896-97 into remissions in 1897-98.

163. After the close of the famine, with the reaping of the generally bounteous autumn harvest and the spring crops which followed it, it became necessary to consider afresh the suspensions and other outstandings of the past year. This consideration has not at the time of writing been completed for all the districts of the Province: but it may be mentioned here that a total sum of Rs. 14,51,587 of suspended and unsuspended arrear revenue has already been remitted. It is probable that some additions will be made to this total before many weeks are past. The balance of the amount suspended will be recovered by easy instalments, repayment in most cases commencing with the *kharif* instalment of February-March 1899. Besides these concessions, enquiries are now proceeding regarding the temporary abatements of revenue required in tracts which have deteriorated during the famine, and where it will be necessary to take something off the demand for a series of years until complete recovery is secured.

Relation of Land Revenue demand to ability of people to resist famine.

164. It is sometimes ignorantly alleged that the pressure of the land revenue on the people is the cause of their inability to resist famine; that the assessment is pitched so high as to leave them with no surplus; and that the regularity of the demand, in spite of the vicissitudes of the seasons, plunges them into debt and involves them in constant difficulties. These statements, so far as the Central Provinces are concerned, can easily be refuted. The incidence of the land revenue demand in these Provinces is lighter than in any other part of India not under the Permanent Settlement, falling at only 9 annas 6 pie per cultivated acre on the Province as a whole. It absorbs probably not more than about 6¼ per cent. (or one anna in the rupee) of the value of a normal outturn. The poorest parts of the Province, such as the mountainous portions of the Satpura Range, where distress has been most severe, pay either no revenue at all (save an insignificant quit-rent) to Government, as the Chhindwara *Jagirs*, or a trifling rate (less than 4 annas per cultivated acre), as in Mandla. Balaghat, one of the districts which suffered most, pays less than 8 annas per cultivated acre, and was under a Revenue Settlement which had not been revised for thirty-three years. It is ordinarily a highly productive district, exporting large quantities of rice to the north. Bilaspur, another deeply distressed district, pays 6 annas 4 pies per cultivated acre, and was last assessed ten years ago. It also, like the rest of Chhattisgarh, is ordinarily an exporting district; and the advent of the Railway has brought immense wealth to the districts of the Chhattisgarh plain by enabling them to export their surplus grain at prices three and four times as high as those which prevailed when there were no other means of carriage than carts and pack bullocks.

In Saugor, Damoh, and Jubbulpore harvest failures have synchronised with or followed the introduction of the revised Settlement; but except in Jubbulpore,

where two-thirds of the land revenue is assessed upon the rich black-soil plain known as the *Haveli*, which bore a fair crop even in the drought of 1896-97, the full revised demand has never yet been exacted from the people. Even in Jubbulpore the suspensions of the last three years have been liberal, and Rs. 5,64,251 of outstanding arrears have just been remitted. Damoh has not since 1893 paid even the amount leviable under the Settlement of 1863.

On the other hand, in Nagpur and Wardha, where the largest proportion of the assets is taken in the form of land revenue, and where a new Settlement has recently been made, collections have been made in full, and these two districts were among those least affected by distress.

Experience shows that the indebtedness of the agricultural population bears little or no relation to the revenue demand. It is in fact a matter of common observation that debt is heaviest, and thrift least common, where the landholder or cultivator has the largest share of the produce left at his disposal. In the Nagpur country, where the Marathas were accustomed to take a high fraction of the produce, and the proportion taken under British rule has continued to be greater than elsewhere, indebtedness is much less than in the rich district of Jubbulpore, where the fraction taken has always been much smaller and the land is more productive. The true cause of indebtedness is extravagance and ostentatious display at weddings and other ceremonies; and a habit of such extravagance is more easily acquired where the margin left in the cultivator's or landlord's hands is large than where it is small, and where his land is an object of desire to the money-lending classes, who are ready to accommodate him in the hope of themselves gaining control over his property.

It must be remembered that although our revenue assessments are based on ascertained rentals, it is very rarely the case that the landlord pays the revenue solely from the cash rents he receives from his tenants. He has besides his *sir* or home-farm land, which in the Province as a whole amounts (including land cultivated by the landlord otherwise than as *sir*) to 18·22 per cent. of the total area in occupation. On this land he is assessed to revenue at tenant rates, and thus not only reaps from it the landlord's, but also the tenant's, profit. The land so reserved by the landlord for his own use is ordinarily the best and richest land in the village: where there is tank irrigation, it enjoys the first claim on the water available: it is thus the most secure portion of the village cultivation, and should with ordinary thrift enable the landlord to meet the recurring demand for revenue without difficulty.

(*ii*).—*Suspension of Forest Dues.*

Edible forest products.

165. The forests of the Central Provinces are remarkable for the variety and large quantity of the edible products which they yield. Lists of these, for the Northern (Vindhyan districts, Nerbudda Valley, and Mandla and Betul on the Satpura plateau) and Southern (Chhattisgarh, Seoni and Chhindwara on the Satpura plateau, and the Nagpur Division) Circles into which the Province is divided for purposes of forest conservancy, will be found among the Appendices to this Report. It will be seen that they include flowers, fruits, seeds, gums, leaves and roots. Among the flowers by far the most important is the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), which yields its harvest in March and April, and is plentiful in almost every district of the Province. This tree is as common in cultivated land as in the forests, being everywhere protected on account of its great value as a food supply. The succulent corolla begins to fall about the end of March, and is gathered, dried in the sun, and stored for future use. All the spirits manufactured in the Province are made from *mahua*, and it affords a valuable store of food, eaten with cereals or alone, throughout the summer and rains as long as it lasts. The seed, gathered in May and June, yields a valuable oil, used by the people instead of *ghi*: it has recently been much in request in Europe for the manufacture of soap. Another important fruit tree is the *achár* (*Buchanania latifolia*), the kernel of which, after the pulp has been eaten, is largely stored for use in Indian confectionery under the name of *chironji*. The *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) is also dried and stored, but not to so great an extent as the two first-named. Besides these,

which are commercial products and stored in quantity for future use, there is a great variety of fruits which are eaten as they mature. Among the most important are the mango, which occurs wild in many parts of the Satpuras (in 1897, however, the mango crop was a complete failure throughout the Province, the trees not even coming into flower), the *bel* (*Aegle Marmelos*), the *karaunda* (*Carissa Carandas*), the *lasora* (*Cordia Myxa*), the *jámun* (*Eugenia Jambolana*), various kinds of fig (especially the *gúlar*, *Ficus glomerata*), the *kánker* (*Flacourtia Ramontchi*) the *kákar* (*Garuga pinnata*), the *dhámin* (varieties of *Grewia*), the *khirni* (*Mimusops indica*), two kinds of wild date (*Phœnix sylvestris* and *Phœnix acaulis*), and three species of *Zizyphus*. Most of these fruits are in season in the hot weather, but the *Zizyphus* is an exception, ripening in December-March, when it is valuable as a famine-food. A useful nut is yielded by the *bahera* (*Terminalia belerica*), ripening in the cold season.

Among the most important edible products of the forests are various kinds of gum, yielded, as will be seen from the lists, by a great variety of trees. These are stored and eaten (generally mixed with *gur* or molasses), as well as sold. Honey and wax are also gathered for food and sale.

The forest dietary during the rainy season is much more limited. To this belong the various kinds of roots (*kánd*, &c.) which are chiefly species of *Dioscorea*, besides some orchids and *Scitamineæ*. Besides these, various green things are used as vegetables (*bháji*) at this season, which will be found most fully specified in the list for the Southern Circle (Nos. 32, 33, 34, 35, 62, 64), though also common in the Northern Division of the Province; one of the most largely used is a species of *Cassia* (*C. Tora*, vernacular *panwár* or *puwár*), which grows everywhere as a common weed; it has a purgative effect when the leaves are fully grown.

At the end of the rains the seeds of various wild grasses are gathered for use as grain. Should the bamboo (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) seed, it forms an important adjunct to the food supply (unfortunately there was no gregarious seeding of bamboos in the Central Provinces either in 1896 or 1897). In many districts the wild "Job's tears" (*Coix lacrima*) which is cultivated largely as a field crop in the hills of Assam and Burma, is abundant and very useful. A wild millet (*sáwank* or *sáwan*, *Panicum colonum*) is also common and much used.

The products above enumerated are by no means confined to the Government forests; as already mentioned (paragraph 2), besides the 19,600 square miles of forest reserves, there are many thousand square miles of forests included in private estates; while such trees as the *mahua*, *ber* (*zizyphus*), *achár*, and *tendu* are conserved even in the midst of cultivation. The importance of the Government forests as sources of food is however very great. The more valuable products in them, such as *mahua*, *achár*, gum, &c., are annually leased to contractors, and bring in a considerable revenue to the Forest Department. In the famine this revenue was surrendered, and, as will be seen from the statement of forest concessions appended to this Report, the forests were thrown open (with the exception of certain limited areas which it was important to protect from fire) to the people in every district except Sambalpur (where the people already enjoy minor forest produce free) and Wardha (where the forest area is comparatively small and distress was slight).

Other forest concessions.

166. Besides food for man, the forests yield an unlimited supply of grazing for cattle. In ordinary seasons a large part of the forest revenue is derived from grazing dues. During the scarcity of 1896 and the famine of 1897 free grazing in the forests was permitted to all except professional cattle breeders, or the collection of grazing dues suspended or postponed in favour of the poor, in all districts except Sambalpur.

Besides these, in all districts where distress prevailed, and there was a market in the neighbourhood of the forests for the produce, the free collection of head-loads of grass and dry wood for fuel was allowed; and in certain districts

of the Nerbudda Division, where the hillmen are accustomed to make baskets and other articles of bamboo for sale, the rates leviable on bamboos were largely reduced.

Money value of forest concessions.

167. The estimated money value of these various concessions—that is, the income surrendered by the Forest Department—is shown below for the two calendar years 1896 and 1897 [the Forest year is reckoned from the 1st July—the latest date for the establishment of the monsoon—to the 30th June, and thus the figures shown in Statement VII (*b*) of the Appendices cover three official years]:—

	Rs.
Timber granted free	4,669
Fuel	43,710
Bamboos	18,559
Grass and grazing	1,77,873
Edible products	91,426
Total ...	3,36,237

Besides the above, the famine caused the following additional charges on the Forest Department:—

	Rs.
Value of forest produce given free for construction of huts and poor-houses	21,553
Forest revenue suspended	31,537
Do. remitted	19,146
Total ...	72,236

Effect of a forest dietary on the health of the aboriginal classes.

168. In the section of this Report dealing with the mortality due to famine will be found some remarks on the effect on the health of the poor, and especially of the aboriginal races, of a dietary consisting to a larger extent than usual of forest products. It is unquestionable that the immoderate use of such foods had a bad effect on their digestive powers, and must have rendered them unable to resist the depressing influences of the rainy season, when (as already noticed) the wild edible products are much more limited than in the summer, and not altogether wholesome. It must be obvious, however, that it would not have been right to refuse the people access to the store of wholesome and valuable food which the forests contained because there were also, among the things which they could eat, other products less wholesome. No such watch could have been kept on the thousands who roamed the forests as would have prevented them from eating what they liked; and even if this had been possible in the Government forests, it would have been impracticable in the vast areas of private forest and ordinary waste land. Moreover, the ill effects of the forest dietary, which is used every year by the aborigines, were apparently due to the want of a sufficient admixture of cereal food rather than to its own intrinsic unwholesomeness. The means of obtaining this admixture, had the people chosen to resort to them, were available in the wages to be earned on relief-works. It was the indisposition of the aboriginal classes to resort to these works, and their exclusive dependence on forest foods, which wrought the injury; and this was an evil which it was impossible to combat by any action within the power of the Administration.

(*iii*).—*Loans to Agriculturists for Seed and Bullocks.*

Need for help in sowing land.

169. Under this head must be considered the action taken both for the distribution of *takávi* loans and of grants from the Charitable Relief Fund. It is needless to enlarge on the importance of the object for which these loans and grants were respectively made. Even in normal times the average cultivator looks to the village money-lender or landlord to supply him with seed-grain, or with money if he requires it for the purchase of bullocks and the expenses of cultivation. These advances he will usually repay at harvest time if the year is good. If it is bad, he incurs fresh debt, but as a general rule he borrows and repays and borrows again. The most thriftless, extravagant or idle will as time goes on become more heavily encumbered and their credit will fail. In a year of famine, preceded as it was by years of scarcity, the liabilities even of industrious tenants must increase, and the less thrifty lose all credit, while the poorest hand-to-mouth cultivators, who at the best of times can with difficulty raise an advance, are completely shut off from all hope of assistance.

The first class can be left to make their own arrangements with the usual agencies of supply, the second may be entrusted with *takávi* loans by Government, but the third, who may abandon their lands at any time, can only be reached by free grants such as were provided from the Charitable Fund.

In addition to the difficulties caused by the reduced credit of the tenants, account had to be taken of the reduced resources of the landlord and the grain-lender. Their stocks had not been replenished by repayment of previous debts, and they could not afford to purchase seed-grain at a high price with the risk of non-recovery before them; thus it was that many tenants who might otherwise have received help from their landlords or regular village-dealers would be driven to go far afield to obtain their supplies of seed.

Arrangements for advances and grants for seed.

170. Arrangements were made in March and April for the preparation of lists of tenants who were considered fit recipients of loans or grants as the case might be; and every officer who could be spared was used to assist in the distribution. Advantage was taken of the Civil Court vacation (May 15th to June 15th) to utilize to the full the services of Civil Judges and Munsifs, and the Tahsildars, the Land Record staff, as well as the Circle Relief Officers, were deputed on this duty. The selection of the recipients, involving detailed enquiries, and the distribution to those selected, were a most arduous task. The disappointed had to be pacified, and those who clamoured for more quieted, while precautions were constantly necessary to ensure that each sum distributed was duly recorded and that the recipients were subjected to no exaction. In some cases *patwaris* were detected in levying commission from tenants who had received advances, and the culprits were promptly punished with becoming severity. Anyone who has experience of parleying with crowds of villagers through the long hours of a hot-weather day, and perhaps far into the night, will appreciate the strain of distributing large sums of money in small doles among thousands of recipients. It must be remembered that the time available for the distribution was very limited, since both money and grain had to reach the husbandman's hands before the rains set in.

Nevertheless, the work was satisfactorily accomplished; some no doubt escaped notice who had good claims to be assisted, and others who could have made their own arrangements may have received unnecessary aid; but the vast majority were deserving people who, but for the sums advanced or the grants made, must have sunk temporarily, at all events, into the class of agricultural labourers, while their lands would have remained untilled to the great detriment of the food-supply of the country.

Amounts involved.

171. The amount of the work done and of assistance given can best be judged by a tabular statement of the sums distributed :—

District.	*Takávi* loans.	Charitable grants.*	Total.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Saugór	71,521	2,29,520	3 01,041
Damoh	2,70.750	2 49 516	5,20 266
Jubbulpore	1,76 657	3,67,692	5 44,349
Mandla	70 664	1,49 408	2,20,072
Seoni	52 533	1,10 907	1 63,440
Narsinghpur	54 912	1 90,723	2,45,635
Hoshangabad	29 933	87,045	1,13 978
Nimar	5,238	37,704	42 942
Betul	34 909	51,782	86 781
Chhindwara	27,250	64,789	92 039
Wardha	11,014	24,318	35,332
Nagpur	12 824	62,902	75,726
Chanda	14 343	35 423	49,766
Bhandara	33,577	1,00,881	1 34 458
Balaghat	2,28 557	3 25 490	5 54 047
Raipur	3,62 146	2,66 819	6,28 965
Bilaspur	1,11,163	2 74 469	3 85,632
Sambalpur	4,095	...	4,095
Total ..	15,69,196	29,08 879	44 78,075

It is not possible to estimate the area sown with these advances; as already explained (*supra*, paragraph 157), some of the sums given were expended on the subsistence of the cultivator between sowing and harvest time; some was spent in the purchase or hire of bullocks; and some, though a very small portion, may have been otherwise misapplied. Moreover, while the cost of sowing an acre with juar or the small millets amounts to a few annas only, that of sowing rice or wheat at the prices prevailing was much more costly, reaching Rs. 3 an acre where prices were highest. But as over 300,000 tenants were assisted from the Charitable Fund alone, it may reasonably be assumed that not less than some 70,000 were helped by *takávi* grants; Deputy Commissioners have unfortunately not reported the exact number. A considerable proportion both of the *takávi* and of the charitable allotments was reserved for the sowing of the spring crops in districts where they were of importance; but efforts were principally concentrated on getting as large an area as possible sown with autumn crops, so as to secure an early food-supply. Moreover, cultivators with good autumn crops on the ground secured by that very fact renewed credit for the seed required for the spring crops. The general efficiency of the action taken will become apparent when the character of the autumn harvest comes to be discussed.

(*iv*).—*Arrangements for the supply of Grain.*

Supply of grain at relief institutions.

172. Generally speaking (with the exceptions mentioned below), there was no interference with private trade, which proved sufficient for all requirements. It was, indeed, found necessary in many cases to give contracts for the supply of grain to relief-works and poor-houses. When those who held stocks locally were unwilling to sell, and the Province was importing from outside, it was often beyond the power of small local traders possessed of no great capital to supply the wants of large relief camps, situated sometimes in remote parts of the country; and this difficulty was naturally most felt during the rains when communications were interrupted and transport not easily procurable. The arrangements for the supply of grain at certain selected camps were entrusted to large firms in Narsinghpur, Chhindwara, Raipur, Bilaspur, Bhandara and Betul, and on a few works in some other districts. In some cases the contractors were given a commission of 5 or 6 per cent. to cover cost of carriage, and sold

* These were the figures supplied by the Provincial Committee of the Charitable Fund in their report up to the end of October. They do not agree altogether with those shown in paragraph 156 above; but the latter are to a later date (end of January 1898), and moreover include relief to artizans as well as to agriculturists.

the grain at the rates prevailing in the head-quarters market, or at towns on the railway. In others they covered these costs in the price charged, and what the Government saved in commission it paid in the shape of increased wages to the workers. These arrangements were, however, merely analogous to those habitually made when large bodies of men have to be provided for—*e. g.*, for troops on the march, or for prisoners in the jails—and can in no sense be characterized as an interference with private trade.

Assistance to traders in certain tracts.

173. In Mandla and the mountainous part of Balaghat, however, considerable assistance from Government was required to place both food and seed grain within the reach of the general public. The arrangements necessitated in these two districts will presently be described, but it may be added that in some other parts of the Province also the intervention of Government was necessary.

In the Chhindwara *Jagirs* advances had to be given to the local dealers before they could undertake to supply the relief centres in that tract (*supra*, paragraph 143). At one remote camp on the borders of the Hoshangabad and Betul districts the Executive Engineer had to purchase supplies directly and transport them to the camp himself. In some parts of Betul advances had to be made to small grain merchants, and in a few instances to malguzars, on condition that they maintained a supply of grain in their villages; the total amount thus advanced was Rs. 3,500.

Action required in Mandla.

174. The question of the supply of grain in Mandla was first raised in a letter to the Commissioner on the 15th January; he was asked to consider whether it was expedient that Government should undertake the direct importation of grain to supply Public Works Department relief-works and relief centres, as well as for consumption by the general public and for seed, or whether a system could be organized (as had been suggested in the Palamau district in Bengal) of stimulating import to particular localities by the grant of a bonus equal to the cost of carriage.

Grain for relief-works in Mandla Tahsil.

Every effort to induce local traders to undertake the supply of grain on the bonus system proved fruitless. It was then decided to give a contract for the supply of grain at relief-works to a contractor, and tenders were invited from grain-dealers at Jubbulpore, since none could be obtained from the local traders. But up to May no offers had been received, and as the monsoon approached the position became serious. The Commissioner of Jubbulpore, the late Mr. Priest, at last succeeded in inducing Raja Seth Gokuldás to undertake the supply of grain at the three charges in the Mandla Tahsil to which access in the rains was difficult; and in accordance with this contract, which was somewhat unwillingly undertaken, the firm despatched in all 4,387 maunds to the places mentioned. But they were not permitted by the Deputy Commissioner to sell to the general public, and as the numbers on the works did not rise as much as had been expected, nearly half the amount, or 2,160 maunds, remained undisposed of, for which a settlement will have to be made with the firm.

Arrangements in Dindori Tahsil.

For the two works in the Dindori Tahsil no contractor at all was forthcoming, and Government had to undertake the necessary arrangements. Grain to the value of Rs. 50,000 was despatched by the Commissioner to a place called Shahpur, some 15 miles from the camps, and supplies to the value of Rs. 25,000 were procured from Rewa by a Naib-Tahsildar specially deputed for the purpose. In this case also requirements were over-estimated, and by the middle of September 7,666 maunds were still in store, and the excess amount had to be sold at a loss.

Grain for relief centres and general public.

For the relief centres advances varying from Rs. 300 to Rs. 1,000 each were made to local dealers, who were held responsible for the supply of grain at these places. These arrangements worked satisfactorily. Similar arrangements were made with local dealers for

the supply of grain to the general public, they being subsidized with advances aggregating Rs. 5,000, and held responsible for keeping a sufficient supply of grain at the principal *bazars* of the district.

Seed grain.

As regards seed grain, it was estimated that there was a serious deficiency of small millet (*kodon*) seed, and, after vain efforts to procure a supply from other districts through large traders or with official aid, the Naib-Tahsildar of Dindori was despatched to Rewa, where he purchased *kodon* seed to the value of Rs. 15,000. This was stored at convenient centres and distributed at the proper time to cultivators.

Arrangements made in Balaghat.

175. In Balaghat somewhat similar arrangements were necessitated for the uplands of the district which adjoin Mandla, and are similarly circumstanced. So far as food grain for relief institutions in this tract, called the Baihar Tahsil, was concerned, a contract was given to a local dealer to transport grain on to the plateau during the hot weather, an advance of Rs. 7,700 being given him for the purpose, and for one camp in the Balaghat Tahsil an advance of Rs. 400 had to be given on one occasion to secure the supply of grain. But the chief difficulty lay later on in obtaining a supply of seed grain and food for subsistence during the rains to the cultivators on the plateau. In the Balaghat Tahsil advances of the kind could safely be given in cash, and the tenants could be left to make their own arrangements, which they did largely by obtaining a supply from the adjoining Bhandara District where stocks still existed. But in the Baihar Tahsil local stocks were entirely depleted, and there were no local dealers able to replenish them. The Balaghat contractor who was first employed failed in securing the necessary transport, and it was found necessary to import directly. The Settlement Officer of Balaghat, Mr. Arthur Mayne, who was also Chairman of the District Committee of the Charitable Fund, undertook the management of these arrangements from the allotment made to the district by the Fund, and his account of the operations is extracted below from the Report of the Provincial Committee:—

Direct imports in the Baihar Tahsil.

> The first of our operations was the import into Baihar of sufficient food to support the poorer agriculturists during the monsoon months, when the care of their fields would prevent them from earning a living on the Government relief-works. When the first grant of Rs. 60,000 was received, the hot weather was already far advanced, and it was clear that there would be great difficulties in transporting the rice some 90 miles from the Railway, through extensive jungles and up steep hill sides on to the isolated Baihar plateau. I decided to attempt the task of arranging the import departmentally. Authorised by the Executive Committee, I made purchases at Gondia Station, and organised a regular transport staff under my direct control. The results exceeded our most sanguine hopes. We imported altogether 8,723 maunds of Rangoon and Raipur rice, costing in all Rs. 44,927. Of this stock we were able to actually deliver in Baihar before the monsoon broke 6,214 maunds.
>
> The conveyance of the 6,000 maunds was no easy work. Carts were with difficulty procured. The cartmen feared to enter that much dreaded plateau, especially as there was a good deal of cholera along the road. Three of our first batch of 63 cartmen died of cholera during the trip. The grant of small gratuities to the widows and orphans of the deceased induced some of the men to make a further trip. Fear of losing their bullocks from scarcity of fodder and water *en route* deterred many hungry tenants from earning a living by joining the transport train. It needed much persuasion to get the men to go. Besides carts, camels were used and packs of Banjara bullocks brought down from Baihar, and from the Chhindwara and Raipur districts. The trouble was amply repaid, for we saved Rs. 13,863 by the departmental management. The cheapest offer we had was at Rs. 36 a *khandi* (of 5 maunds) delivered at Baihar and at Rs. 28 at Balaghat. To purchase 6,214 and 2,509 maunds delivered at Baihar and Balaghat, respectively, would have cost Rs. 58,791 instead of our actual total expenditure of Rs. 44,927. Of the 2,509 maunds of Rangoon rice left at Balaghat, we sold 830 maunds at a profit of Rs. 184-6-0 after deducting all expenses. The balance, 1,679 maunds, was used to stock a cheap grain shop opened for the sale at cost price to all persons who were getting less than Rs. 5 per head, and at the reduced rate of ten seers to the rupee to all who were getting less than Rs. 3 per head. The rice was sold for Rs. 6,297, the transaction costing the Fund Rs. 1,677. The cheap grain shop was a great boon to the poorest of the inhabitants of Balaghat, and, coupled with our putting on the local market our surplus stock of 830 maunds of rice, helped materially to keep down prices during the monsoon months. The import of so much food-grain into Baihar also helped to keep prices steadier there, which the distribution of money there would have failed to do.

Our next large operation was the purchase and distribution of *rabi* seed. This district was extraordinarily destitute of *rabi* seed, as the greater part of its *rabi* area had been fallow for the past two years. Some kinds of seed could not be procured anywhere of the right quality and to an adequate amount, and we were obliged to obtain the best substitutes we could. Any local purchase by us of the small stocks of seed left with the few well-to-do malguzars and *sahukars* would not have increased the area sown, and so it was decided to import all seed from other districts. As some of our agriculturists who had money resorted to the Railway Stations in the Bhandara District to make purchases, I decided to avoid buying so near home, for fear of increasing the local demand for seed-grain, the supply of Gondia, Tumsar, &c., being quite inadequate. The stocks at Raipur, Rajnandgaon and Dongargarh were rapidly exhausted, and as the rainy season was on, could not be replenished from the country round there. It was then necessary to send as far as Calcutta and Bhagalpur to obtain grain at anything like a reasonable price. *Urad, lakhori* and linseed were distributed at the time of "*utera*" sowing, it being the practice in this district to scatter these three kinds of grain broadcast among the standing rice. A second distribution of wheat, gram and linseed was made a few weeks later when the time for sowing with the plough arrived. Some *sarson* (mustard) seed was purchased and sent to Baihar, where it is in great demand. Wheat was bought by the Tahsildar in Baihar from Banjaras who brought it through the rugged mountain country from the Raipur plains. Altogether 6,843 *khandis* of *rabi* seed were purchased at a cost of Rs. 1,03,318 which, with railway freight and all other expenses, came to Rs. 1,14,524. The transport of all this grain at a time when agricultural operations were in full swing was a task of great difficulty. Much of the stuff had to be carted 27 miles to Balaghat, with two unbridged rivers in flood to be crossed. Seven hundred and forty-eight *khandis* were transported to Baihar across a number of mountain torrents where there were no proper ferry arrangements.

Imports of grain in the Lower Taluks of the Sironcha Tahsil of Chanda.

176. There was one other remote corner of the Province where special measures for the import of grain had to be arranged for. This was the Sironcha Tahsil of the Chanda District, a narrow strip of country lying between the Bastar State and the Godavari river, adjoining the Nizam's Dominions and the Godavari district of Madras. This was, properly speaking, not a distressed area; the juari harvest had been excellent; but the people sold recklessly to traders from Hyderabad and Madras, and, as a consequence, stocks became very low in the upper Taluk of Sironcha, and were almost entirely depleted in the lower Taluks of Cherla. Rupees 3,000 were placed at the disposal of the Tahsildar of Sironcha for the Cherla Taluks which were in the greatest need, and this official despatched Rs 1,500 worth of juar from Sironcha, and imported Rs. 332 worth of paddy from Hyderabad. Another Rs. 500 worth of grain had to be imported from Vellugudem. These supplies were exhausted by August. Export from Sironcha was no longer possible, and there was no grain in the Cherla *bazars*. Rupees 2,000 were accordingly sanctioned for the establishment of cheap grain shops. Three main villages were selected, and the Tahsildar succeeded after great difficulty in importing supplies from Dumagudem by boat. During the time for which the cheap grain shops were working about 1,200 maunds were imported, of which over three-fourths were used for village and gratuitous relief, and the rest disposed of at the cheap shops, which remained open till November.

F.—Special Establishment and Organization.

General sketch of organization.

177. The organization of work-relief under the Public Works Department, and the establishment which provided for its supervision, have already been described in paragraph 82 of this Report; and it has also been explained (paragraph 68) how it early became necessary to transfer from the Deputy Commissioner to the Public Works Department and its constituted chain of authorities the direct responsibility for the management of such works, while the general oversight of all relief operations in his district was still retained by him. Full details of the organization and establishment employed on the relief-works under the Public Works Department will be found in the report by the Chief Engineer which forms one of the Appendices of this Report. The following paragraphs relate mainly to the establishment and organization dealing with other branches of famine relief.

District Officer.

The responsible officer in each district was, of course, the Deputy Commissioner. Over him was the Commissioner of Division, to whom (as well as to the Secretariat direct) he submitted

weekly reports showing the numbers under each form of relief, with remarks bringing to notice any special points requiring elucidation. In this way, and by constant personal visitation and inspection, the Commissioners were able to keep themselves closely in touch with relief operations, and to gauge promptly the development of distress.

Subordination of ordinary work to famine.

All branches of ordinary work were as far as possible subordinated to the great task of the relief of distress. In some, indeed, the pressure of famine worked automatically. The institutions of civil suits declined with the impossibility of recovering amounts decreed; revenue collections became unnecessary with the extensive remissions and suspensions granted; and forest work was greatly curtailed by the slackening of markets and the throwing open of forests to free concessions. On the other hand, as has already been noticed, crime necessarily expanded, giving full occupation to the Magistracy; the work of the Police was greatly augmented by the increase of thefts, by duties incidental to famine relief (the relief of wanderers, the management of kitchens, the special reporting of vital statistics, &c.), and by the necessity of guarding treasure sent out to relief camps and the camps themselves; and the jails became much overcrowded, necessitating arduous work and supervision by the establishments in charge.

Charges and Famine Relief Officers.

178. The first step in organisation was to parcel out the district into charges, to each of which a superior officer was appointed, who was required to have his head-quarters in the midst of his charge and to be constantly moving about within it. The number and extent of these charges varied, of course, with the size of the district and the intensity of the distress. Our districts range in population from Raipur (1,584,000) and Bilaspur (1,164,000) to Damoh (326,000), Betul (323,000) and Nimar (285,000); the distances to be covered, and the degree of the distress, necessarily caused the extent of each charge to vary greatly.

The whole available district staff of the Province was utilized for the control of these charges: first, the Assistant Commissioners and Extra-Assistant Commissioners who could be spared from head-quarters; then the Tahsildars, each within his own tahsil, to whom by the Famine Code the supervision of famine-relief is primarily entrusted. Additions were made to these, first, from other Departments which were able to spare men—chiefly the Police, Forest, Settlement and Education Departments; and secondly, by obtaining officers of the Staff Corps from the Military Department. In addition to these, two officers were borrowed from the Burma Commission to hold charge of districts, and thus set free Assistant Commissioners for famine work, and two Assistant Commissioners were lent by the Government of the Punjab. The staff of Tahsildars was largely added to, tahsil areas when necessary being broken up, in some districts into two, in others into three divisions. In this way the following officers (apart from the staff entrusted with the ordinary district work, which was utilized as far as possible for famine purposes in addition to its ordinary duties) were placed upon special duty in connection with famine, under the designation of Famine or Circle Relief Officers:—

Officers of the rank of Assistant Commissioners or Extra-Assistant Commissioners	18
Officers of other Departments	17
Staff Corps Officers	22
Additional Tahsildars	27
Total ...	84

Circle Inspectors.

179. Under these Circle Relief Officers, who had the supervision of comparatively large tracts, were the Circle or Revenue Inspectors. Ordinarily these officers' duties are connected with the supervision of the *patwáris* or village accountants, each Revenue Inspector having a circle of villages among which he is required to be constantly on the move. By the Famine Code these Revenue Inspectors in famine time become entrusted with the duty of watching over the local relief operations within their circles, the most important of which are the preparation

of registers of village relief, and the distribution of relief to the persons entered in the registers. As already indicated, the expansion of village relief rendered necessary a great addition to the number of these officers, their ordinary circles being sub-divided into several charges. No less than 176 additional Revenue Inspectors had to be entertained, the number being specially large in the severely distressed districts during the rains. Each Revenue Inspector was required to keep and submit a diary of his movements to the Circle Relief Officer; and each Circle Relief Officer, similarly, submitted a diary, with a record of all noteworthy facts elicited on his tours, to the Deputy Commissioner. Most of the Commissioners also kept themselves informed of the local conditions of relief and distress by obtaining these diaries for perusal when orders had been passed on them by the Deputy Commissioner.

Devotion of Famine Staff.

180. This was the general organization; and it is impossible to speak too highly of the devotion generally exhibited, during especially trying seasons of the year, by Circle Relief Officers and District Officers in constantly moving about and watching over the development of relief. The military officers were particularly useful, showing great activity, intelligence, and resource. In former famines, affecting only a part of the Empire, it has been customary for distressed Provinces to borrow civil establishments from those able to spare them. During the famine of 1897 this was not possible to any considerable extent, and the officers of the Staff Corps formed an excellent substitute. Unfortunately, in August 1897 commenced the military operations on the North-West Frontier, and many of the officers lent to the Administration had to be withdrawn, and that at a very critical time. Sometimes others were sent in their place, but these necessarily had to gain experience before they became as useful as their predecessors.

Subordinate executive establishment,

181. In addition to these officers, 150 officials of the standing of Naib-Tahsildars were entertained or deputed for Public Works Relief Charges, while 16 Additional Naib-Tahsildars were placed in charge of works under Civil Officers. The persons selected for these duties were as far as possible chosen from officials already in Government service, who, having a guarantee of honesty in their past service, might be expected to withstand the temptations to peculation which famine relief work inevitably affords. In the great majority of cases they did good service; and the frequent and searching inspections to which their work was subjected prevented any very extensive frauds. That some failures should occur was only to be expected; examples were made of the delinquents who were detected and prosecuted in the Courts.

and Clerks.

Besides these executive officers, 73 clerks were entertained to aid in the disposal of the enormous mass of famine correspondence, statements and accounts in the Secretariat and Commissioners' and Deputy Commissioners' offices; and the Secretariat was strengthened by the appointment of an additional Secretary.

Medical Staff.

182. Another Department, hardly less important to the success of famine administration than the executive organization, was that connected with the medical supervision of the arrangements made. Among the Appendices to this Report will be found a memorandum by the Administrative Medical Officer, Surgeon-Colonel G. Hutcheson, giving an account of the medical arrangements. The strain upon the medical staff of the Province, in the supervision of Relief Camps, Poor-houses, and other relief institutions, was very great. Unfortunately the exigencies of famine necessities elsewhere, the demands for service in combating plague in Western and Northern India, and, in August and September, the requirements for military service on the North-West Frontier, led to the subordinate staff employed being less highly qualified than was desirable, and to the withdrawal of useful assistants who had been lent to the Province. Their places were filled as far as possible by the appointment of pensioned Hospital Assistants, Vaccinators and Superintendents of Vaccination; but not only was the Province denuded in the autumn of the extra assistance which had been liberally given in the earlier stages of the famine, but it had also to surrender four Civil Surgeons and one Commissioned Medical

Officer in charge of a Central Jail for military service. These were unavoidable losses, and it may be hoped that should a famine occur again, it will not be conjoined with two other calamities in the shape of war and plague.

The additional medical establishments entertained at one time or another during the famine were as shown below :—

Commissioned Medical Officers for inspection duty ...	5
Assistant Surgeons, Military	2
Do., Civil	9
Hospital Assistants, Military	56
Do., Civil	71
Superintendents of Vaccination utilised for famine charges	26
Vaccinators	209

Minor establishment.

183. A statement (No. X) appended to this Report shows all these establishments as they were distributed between the several districts. It does not include the large army of minor famine establishments—the work agents, cashiers, accountants, gang muharrirs, &c.—attached to the relief-works under the Public Works Department, the number of whom was necessarily constantly fluctuating; nor the poor-house establishments of superintendents, clerks, store-keepers, matrons, with the large menial staff of cooks, water-men, warders and sweepers; nor the subordinate medical establishments, such as compounders and dressers. It will be obvious that the organization and control of these minor establishments formed one of the main difficulties of famine administration. In a small Province, organized to meet the ordinary necessities of public business on an economical scale, and with a limited supply of educated men willing to serve on small pay, it is clearly impossible to expect that the large additional staff required to cope with the pressing emergencies of a famine will be easily or rapidly procured; and the conditions of the work entailed frequent changes and recurring vacancies. In the circumstances of the case some failures were inevitable; but as experience was gained matters improved, and on the whole the discipline and conduct of the staff employed were fairly satisfactory.

G.—Summary of Expenditure.

Gross cost of the famine.

184. The figures contained in Statements IX (*a*) to IX (*c*) appended to this Report have been furnished (for the Public Works Department) by the Examiner of Accounts and (for the Civil Department) by the Comptroller; but it will be understood that at the date when this Report has to be compiled they cannot be absolutely final. They are subject to adjustments and corrections such as are inevitable in large transactions extending over a long period; but, bearing as they do the authority of the Accounts Department, they are no doubt close approximations to facts.

The total expenditure which the famine has entailed is shown below for the Province as a whole under each head and sub-head :—

A.—Public Works Department—

	Rs.
Wages	72,41,337
Gratuitous relief	7,95,247
Tools and Establishment	22,51,713
Total Public Works Department ...	1,02,88,297

B.—Civil Department—

(*i*).—*Direct Expenditure on Famine-relief.*

	Rs.
Relief-works in charge of Civil Officers	10,75,718
Poor-houses	8,65,906
Village and town relief	25,72,792
Special relief to weavers and artizans	1,26,142
Gratuitous relief in other ways	3,83,457
Salaries and Establishments	2,72,746
Miscellaneous	25,681
Total ...	53,22,442

(*ii*).—*Indirect Expenditure on Famine-relief.*

	Rs.
Famine loans	11,53,360
Indirect expenditure charged to other heads ...	3,52,388
Total ...	15,05,748

The grand total of the expenditure has thus been Rs. 1,71,16,487. If to this be added the expenditure of the Indian Charitable Fund, about 37 lakhs, other private charity possibly 2 lakhs, and advances under the *Takávi* Acts of Rs. 19,59,315, the total disbursements of the famine period in one shape or another come to over 2¼ crores of rupees, or more than two and a half times the land revenue demand (including cesses) of the Province.

To these must be added the loss in land revenue due to suspensions and remissions, aggregating Rs 30,92,600, and the value of free produce extracted from the forests, aggregating Rs. 3,36,237. The list might further be increased if account were taken of the loss of Excise and Forest Revenue apart from free concessions, as well as losses in respect of collection of arrears and previous advances and the reduced receipts of many other Departments of the Government.

185. The statements appended to this Report—IX (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*)—give the details of expenditure under the various heads of relief administration. Taking the total expenditure at the figure given, after excluding famine loans, for which accurate returns of the numbers relieved are not available, in the preceding paragraph, *viz.*, Rs. 1,59,63,127, the incidences per day-unit relieved work out as follows :—

	Rs.	a.	p.
Works under Civil Officers	0	1	10
Poor-houses	0	1	11
Village relief	0	1	0
Relief to weavers and artizans	0	2	2
Gratuitous relief given in other ways	0	0	8
All branches of relief under Civil Officers ...	0	1	3
Public Works	0	1	9
All forms of relief	0	1	6

Thus if all question of the value and utility of the work done be omitted from consideration, it appears that the most expensive form of relief was that given to weavers and artizans in the form of advances to enable them to carry on their trade, while the cheapest was the gratuitous relief given outside the poor-houses and village relief, that is to say, mainly, the relief given in children's kitchens. But to ascertain the actual cost to Government of the weaver relief, which, as has already been shown, was of importance only in the Nagpur District, and was a small item, it is necessary to deduct the value of the cloth sold. This amounts to almost exactly 75 per cent. of the total expenditure, so that the actual incidence per head of this form of relief is about 6½ pies.

186. Statement IX (*c*) shows that the unit incidences under the various forms of relief vary very greatly from district to district. So much indeed is this the case in respect of civil expenditure that some of the incidences have been altogether omitted from the table as being obviously incorrect. This is due to a large extent to differences of classification; the divergences in the incidence of total civil expenditure and of Public Works Department expenditure are not so striking. It is true that under the head "Public Works" the incidences vary from 10 pies in Chanda to 33 in Bhandara. But in Chanda the relief works were of quite insignificant extent and duration as compared with other districts. The high incidence in Bhandara is not easy to explain, but it will be noticed that the incidences were above the average in the other districts of the Nagpur country,—Nagpur and Wardha. In nine of the eighteen districts the range of incidences is only from 19 to 21 pies. It will be noticed that the incidences given under the head "Public Works" do not agree with those given in Public Works Department Appendix F. These latter include the cost of gratuitous relief to dependents, and the units are deduced from daily instead of from fortnightly returns, and are probably therefore more accurate. Under Civil expenditure the general incidences were lowest in Chanda, Bhandara, and Betul, in all of which districts much use was made of kitchens, and in two of which, Chanda and Betul, the expensive poor-house system played a very small part, and highest in Hoshangabad, where kitchens were very few. In this district a very high incidence was shown under "gratuitous relief given in other ways," but this has been omitted from the statement as obviously due to misclassification. The cost per head on Civil Works was high in Jubbulpore, where the supervision was expensive, and low in Seoni, Chanda and Bilaspur, where local and unpaid agency was largely utilized. Under "Village Relief" the incidences show little variation from district to district. With few exceptions the rates of payment were constant over the Province.

It might have been expected that differences in the price of grain would have been a main factor in producing differences of incidence. But a comparison of the table of incidences with the table of prices on page 37 will show that this is not the case. Several districts where prices were exceptionally high show low incidences and *vice versâ*.

The calculation of these incidences has been a matter of great difficulty. They cannot, at the best, attain perfect accuracy, since the units which form the divisors are deduced, not from daily, but from fortnightly returns. The errors due to this cause are only important where the numbers were small or underwent violent fluctuations. The errors due to misclassification are more serious, and it has not been possible to correct them all. It is probable that a careful and detailed re-examination of the figures district by district would lead to small alterations in many of the incidences under the minor heads. The general incidences, however, under "Civil Expenditure" and "Public Works" may be taken to be as nearly correct as it is possible to make them, and they show that each unit relieved on the relief works of the Public Works Department cost 21 pies, and each one relieved in other ways 15 pies. From beginning to end of the famine 174,268,000 units were relieved at an average cost of $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas per head. The expenditure is equivalent to relief administered at this rate to the whole population of the Province for 16 days.

187. The average cost of relief per head is given, in the North-Western Provinces, as 13·8 pies, and in the Punjab as 19·1 pies. The cost in the Central Provinces is thus slightly below that in the Punjab and considerably above that in the North-Western Provinces. The difference between the Central Provinces and North-Western Province figures is largely, if not entirely, accounted for by the higher range of prices in this Province. Another cause which tended to make famine relief more expensive in the Central Provinces than in Northern India was the comparative lateness of the development and consequently of the subsidence of distress. Could the figures for the period October—June be stated separately, it is probable that they would show a very much lower incidence per head. But the numbers to be relieved during several months of the rains were scarcely less than in the open months, and heavy

expenditure was necessary on the construction of shelter huts at relief works, and on the improvement or re-construction of hastily erected poor-houses. The expenditure on poor-houses was of a kind which was very easily watched and checked. Most of the poor-houses were situated at head-quarters, and were constantly inspected by superior officers, besides being generally under the direct personal supervision of officers of much superior rank to those available for the charge of relief works. The opportunities for peculation were probably fewer, and the possibility of waste less, in the case of poor-houses than in most other branches of relief administration; and the poor-house accounts were most carefully scrutinized week by week both by Commissioners and in the Secretariat. Yet the necessities of increased shelter, of improved sanitation, and of additional hospital comforts during the rainy months caused the average weekly cost per head to rise from about 8 annas in the early months to a rupee and in some cases more in the latter half of the year.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND MORTALITY STATISTICS.

Scope of this Chapter.

188. Among the appendices to this Report will be found a Memorandum by Surgeon-Colonel Hutcheson, Sanitary Commissioner and Administrative Medical Officer, which contains an exhaustive examination of the vital statistics of the two years 1896 and 1897, and places in the clearest light the deplorable effects on the public health and the condition of the people of the calamity which, following close upon a long succession of unfavourable years, fell upon the Province in the autumn months of 1896. The detailed statistics of births and deaths in this Memorandum, and in the statistical tables which follow it, contain all that is necessary to exhibit the facts; and the examination of them in this Chapter will be mainly directed, not to a mere repetition of the figures, but to their illustration by reference to the varying conditions of the time, the progress of the seasons, the pressure of distress, and the measures taken to bring relief to the famine-stricken people.

General observations on famine mortality.

189. It is natural to accept, as a test and a measure of the success of relief operations, the degree to which they are effective in bringing mortality under control; and no doubt, broadly speaking, the connection between one and the other is justified. But in estimating the success of famine administration many factors have to be taken into consideration. No human power can so adjust the conditions of life as to annul the effect of long continued under-feeding, due to a succession of short harvests, on the stamina and resisting power of the poorer classes; the physical condition, due to antecedent circumstances, in which the population enter upon a period of severe and acute distress, must greatly determine the degree to which, even with the most liberal help, they are able to bear up against it: while those antecedent circumstances, though cumulative in their effect, may not be of a nature to call for extensive and costly measures of relief, especially at a time when, according to all human probability, nature herself seemed to be about to bring them to an end by rewarding the cultivators with a bounteous and abundant harvest. As has already been fully set forth in Chapter I of this Report, this was the condition of things in the Central Provinces during the rains of 1896. Till close upon the end of September the autumn crops throughout the Province could not have promised better, and nothing pointed to the disastrous failure which was at hand.

Again, the populations of India, to quote the words of the Indian Famine Commission of 1880, "are exposed continually to destructive agencies, which "under more favourable conditions might be regarded as preventible, but against "which society has at present neither the means nor the knowledge necessary to "secure its protection. Large numbers of the people live in so primitive a condi-"tion, irrespective of anything that can properly be called poverty, as to render "them liable to diseases against which they have no effectual remedy or defence. "Epidemics may sweep them off by tens of thousands without attracting attention, "because these agencies are incessantly at work. Famine, which intensifies "their activity, is more conspicuous from its less regular recurrence, but it is "really only one, and perhaps not the most deadly, of numerous influences by which "at present human life among the people of India is cut short, and which can be "effectually counteracted only by the general advance of society in wealth, "knowledge and material resources."

Epidemics.

As will be seen in the sequel, the great destruction of life during the famine period was due to diseases registered as fevers. To this cause, in every part of India, the great bulk of the recurring annual mortality is ascribed; and it has always been observed to be particularly fatal and widespread either during a famine or shortly after its close. What the climatic conditions are which bring about an unusual prevalence of fever in any particular year is as yet very imperfectly known. In paragraph 82 of their report the Famine Commission record the circumstances of an extraordinary outbreak of fever in the North-Western Provinces in the months of

DEATH-RATES

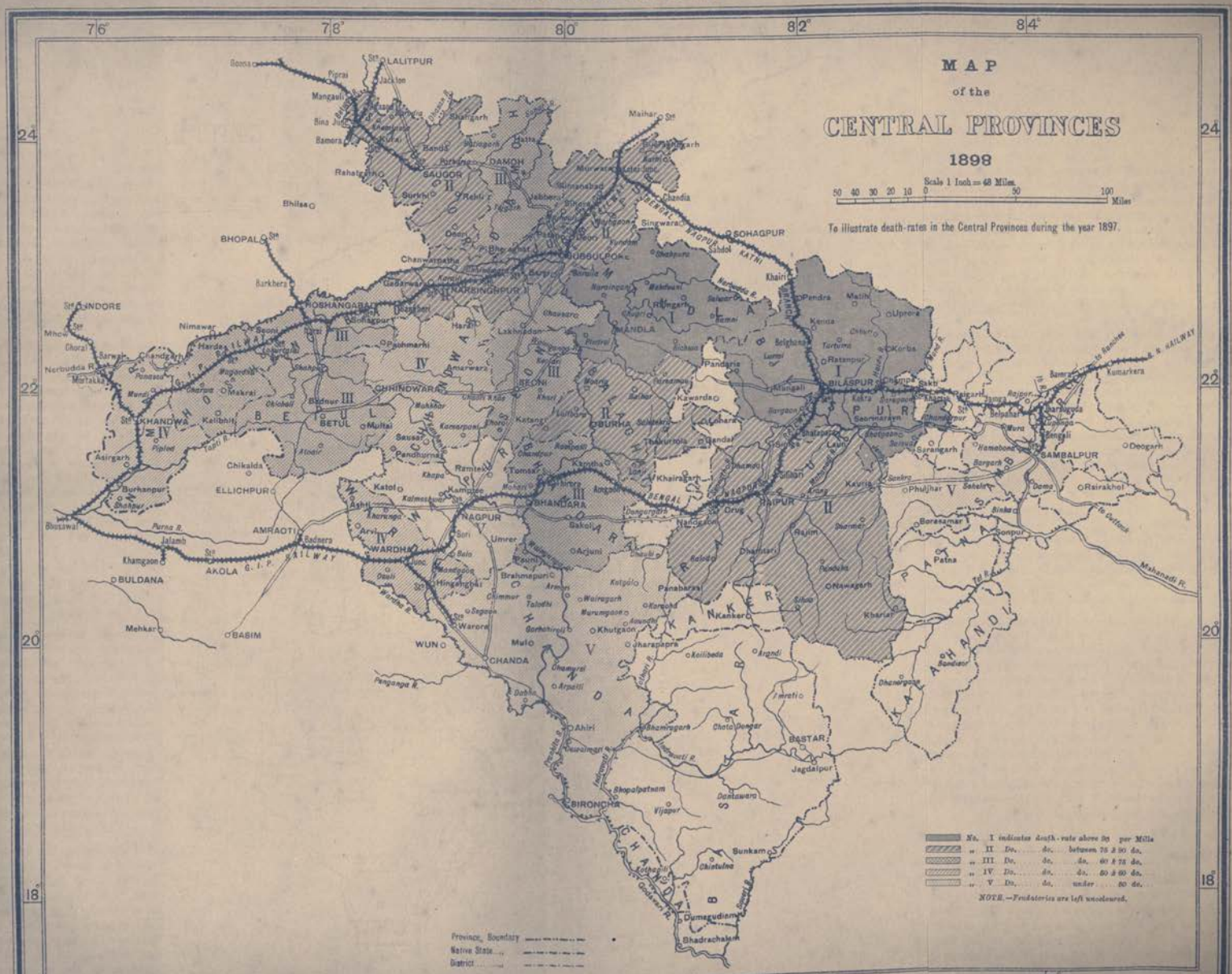

Photo., S. I. O., Calcutta.

September and October 1879, when "no scarcity whatever existed, prices through-"out the whole country were moderate, and the autumn harvest had been "exceptionally good." But if we are ignorant of the precise nature of the climatic cause of fever, there can be no doubt that the method of treatment of this disease in vogue among the people tends to give it a fatality which is greatly in excess of that which would accompany it if proper remedies were applied, and which in a time of general privation and short feeding must immensely enhance its destructive power. The Civil Surgeon of Damoh writes:—

> The natives believe in a certain disease called "*langni*," in which the person is first attacked by fever. It lasts for a few days and is followed by a state in which the patient declines all food, and is not pressed with it. I have an idea that this abstinence from food in a constitution already weakened by fever kills the patient. It is a popular belief that in certain fevers no food should be given for a certain number of days, the number of days being fixed by the native physician.
>
> During a course of fever there might be 2 or 3 or 4 "*langans*," as the case may be. If the patient survives one period of *langan*, well and good; if not, he gets a second attack of fever followed by a second *langan*, which he seldom survives.

And the Civil Surgeon of Saugor similarly records:—

> I may mention that over and over again my questions brought to light the fact that the patient in malarial fever had endeavoured to cure himself by "*langan*," which means starvation treatment. This of course must have favoured the production of heart exhaustion in every case where the practice obtained.

This "starvation treatment" appears to be the common method of dealing with an attack of fever throughout the Hindustani-speaking area of the Central Provinces, and it is clear that it is specially calculated to induce a high mortality from this cause during a time of prolonged privation.

Character and habits of the people.

Lastly,—and this is the most important factor in controlling the success of the machinery organized upon the plan devised in 1880 by the Famine Commission for saving life in time of famine,—the habits of large classes of the people of the Central Provinces are such that the task of helping them is one of almost insuperable difficulty. This matter is fully discussed in the first Chapter of this Report, where the character and habits of the aboriginal races are described; and a most graphic account of actual experience in the heart of the aboriginal tract will be found in the note by Mr. H. Sharp on famine-relief in Mandla, appended to this Report. In a poor, backward, and thinly-peopled Province, where the Government establishments engaged in the work of famine-relief have to cover extensive areas in their circuits, it is of course impossible to watch minutely over the application of help to its proper purpose: no device could ensure that a dole given to a pauper to last him for a month, in a district like Mandla or Bilaspur, should not be squandered in riotous living for a day (*supra*, paragraph 128); nor could any action of the State prevent the Gond and Baiga from roaming the forests and living on their produce until an exclusive course of such diet reduced them to a condition in which no assistance was able to save them from death. In the aboriginal tracts, as has already been noticed, nothing would induce the people to resort to relief-works while strong and fit to labour. If the Government had undertaken their gratuitous feeding without exacting as a test the work they were able to do, it would have departed from the principle that the able-bodied must labour in order to be helped, and would have had upon its hands the whole labouring population of the country. And what is true of the aborigines, in the parts where they form the bulk of the population, is true of a large portion of the other classes who inhabit the Central Provinces. It is probable that nowhere in the Province—except possibly in the centre of the Nerbudda Valley—are the people so mobile, or so ready to resort to the means appointed for relief, as they are in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh or Behar. The difference between this Province and other parts of India may be shortly expressed by saying that here relief had to be *forced upon* the people, while elsewhere the people expected and readily availed themselves of the relief provided. Here distances relatively insignificant prevented the able-bodied from resorting to relief-works, while the least attempt to draft workers in bodies from one work to another resulted in the workers melting away; there, it is believed, no difficulty was experienced

in getting large numbers of people to work at a distance from their homes, and drafting was managed with ease. In such a country as the Central Provinces—and probably everywhere else in India—it is impossible to provide a relief work under proper management at every man's door; there are no works which could be undertaken in the vast expanses of sheet rock which cover the poorest areas of the Satpura districts; and no supervision that is practically possible could be applied to the multitude of sites where work would be necessary to bring it within five miles of every distressed village. These are extreme cases; but each district in the Province contains some area to which such considerations apply, and even in the open and populous parts the readiness of the people to accept relief is markedly less than it is in other parts of India.

To quote again the Report of the Famine Commission (paragraph 83):—

In these circumstances the hope that any human endeavours will altogether prevent an increase of mortality during a severe famine is untenable. It is impossible for the State entirely to counteract the effect of high prices, the cessation of wages, the disturbance of the ordinary routine of life, the general results of shortened food-supply to millions of people. No imaginable system of relief will completely meet all the various degrees of privation and suffering which a famine produces, and which are all more or less prejudicial to the public health and life, though many are too indefinite and obscure to be dealt with by any machinery of official charity, however elaborate and well contrived. There must always be suffering and want which will escape notice; and however extensive be the measures of public aid, *there will always be classes who, from fixed habits or social institutions of various sorts, or from their personal character or ignorance, will neither help themselves nor be helped, and who, though they suffer from extreme want, will linger on without applying for or accepting relief till it is too late to save their lives.*

Novelty of relief operations.

This preface may conclude with the remark that one important reason why the poorer classes in the Central Provinces responded so little to the efforts made to bring relief within their reach may be found in the fact that this is the first occasion on which famine-relief on the scale contemplated by the Famine Code has been attempted here. Elsewhere in India there have been many famines of greater or less severity during the last thirty years, and the people are accustomed to the idea and methods of official charity. The year 1896-97 is the first occasion when, within living memory, famine in its full intensity has visited the Province (*vide supra*, paragraph 16), and officials and people alike were unpractised in the art of applying or taking advantage of measures of relief.

Vital statistics for the Province as a whole.

190. The gradual deterioration in the health of the people which had been taking place in the years preceding the famine, and the great excess of mortality during the famine period over the Province as a whole, are exhibited in the following table:—

	Number of births.	Rate *per mille.*	Number of deaths.	Rate *per mille.*
Decennial mean 1880—90	359,487	40·66	285,990	32·44
1894	368,884	38·82	353,606	37·22
1895	317,432	33·41	349,137	36·75
1896	301,427	31·72	468,469	49·31
1897	254,979	26·84	658,822	69·34

Since 1895 there has thus been an excess of deaths over births represented by the following figures:—

1895	... 21,705
1896	... 167,042
1897	... 403,903

The chief diseases of the period and the number of deaths attributed to each of them were as under:—

	Decennial mean.	1896.	1897.
Cholera	14,687	52,985	57,131
Small-pox	5,537	7,747	3,641
Dysentery and diarrhœa	23,584	29 882	81,092
Fevers	168,632	280,760	389 335
Other causes	42,539	97,095	127,623
Total ...	285 990	468 469	658,822

Thus in both 1896 and 1897 cholera was prevalent to an extraordinary degree, the number of deaths due to the disease in the former year having only once been nearly equalled, in 1889, while the number in 1897 is the highest on record. Small-pox, in the two years taken together, was almost exactly the decennial average. Dysentery and diarrhœa, the special famine diseases, were not very largely in excess of the mean in 1896, but were 3½ times as fatal in 1897.

According to sex the deaths were distributed as follows during the two years:—

	Male.	Female.	Total.
1896	254,866	213 603	468 469
1897	365,803	293,019	658 822

Mortality by ages.

191. If the year 1894 be taken as a fairly typical year in which conditions were neither very favourable nor very unfavourable over the Province as a whole, and the mortality at particular ages during 1896 and 1897 be compared with the mortality at the same ages in 1894, an idea will be gained of the extent to which the scarcity and famine conditions of the two past years have told upon infants, children and the aged respectively:—

	1894, number of deaths.	1896, number of deaths.	Excess per cent. over deaths of 1894.	1897, number of deaths.	Excess per cent. over deaths of 1894.
Infants under 1 year	110,272	95,896	—13	101,969	—8
Children under 15 years	84,232	119,171	+41	172,967	+105
Aged 60 and over	49,695	61,162	+25	86,013	+73
All other persons	109 407	192,240	+76	297,873	+172
Total ...	353,606	468,469	+32	658,822	+86

The decrease in infant mortality is of course largely accounted for by the reduced birth-rates of the two years; but as regards the other classes, it seems clear from these figures that it was not the children or the aged who suffered most, and that the greatest excess of deaths took place among persons between 15 and 60, that is to say, among persons best able to look after themselves and earn a living. The inference appears to be that relief was most successful in saving life among those least able to apply for it, or to shift for themselves.

192. The mortality statistics of 1896 have already been dealt with in paragraphs 36 and 37 of this Report. The table given in paragraph 36, which separates the mortality due to cholera and small-pox from that due to other causes, will show that, *outside* the Jubbulpore Division, the *only districts which displayed a remarkably high* death-rate (not due to epidemics) were Narsinghpur (53·89), Nimar (48·61), Balaghat (47·42), and Hoshangabad (43·41).

Mortality of 1896.

What was done in these districts to meet such distress as existed has already been related (paragraph 35); and the relief afforded in 1896 in the Jubbulpore Division has been described in detail in paragraphs 28 to 34. In the light of the experience of the habits and character of the people which has since been gained during the Famine of 1897, it cannot be contended that the measures taken included all which would be taken now under similar conditions. But the experience now obtained was not available then. The provision of relief in work, the throwing open of the forests, and the establishment of poor-houses, followed the precedent which had been found, in the Saugor and Damoh scarcity of 1894, to provide what seemed to be sufficient assistance to the people. The extent to which relief required to be forced upon the distressed population, and the tendency of aboriginal races (such as make up a large proportion of the population of the Division, and were the most distressed part of it) to abstain from resort to work-relief, to rely upon forest produce, and to break down in their villages through the use of unwholesome food during the rains—all of which lessons were fully learnt in 1897—were not realized or understood.

Whether, with the extension of house-to-house relief in villages during the unhealthy months of July—October (in which, as will be seen from paragraph 37, most of the excess mortality was concentrated), it would have been possible largely to reduce the death-rate, may be problematical. To some extent, judging by the experience of 1897, it could certainly have been reduced. But it must be remembered that until the famine proper set in, and special measures were taken to secure the prompt reporting *weekly* to the district head-quarters of the mortality in rural circles, the vital statistics of the time were not accessible to the authorities until a considerable interval had elapsed. In the rains movement is difficult and uncertain, and the season is not one in which the district establishments ordinarily move about much. Thus the facts did not come to light sufficiently early for a remedy to be applied, and the experience was wanting which would have enabled them to be foreseen. The following extracts from a Resolution (No. 574, dated the 1st February 1897) submitted to the Government of India, giving an account of the relief operations of 1896, seem to sum up all that can now be said on the subject:—

> The heavy mortality in the Division during the months of August and September is much to be deplored, but it arose from causes difficult to control. With the advent of the monsoon, the labourers on the roads and railway began leaving for their villages to seek employment on agricultural operations; while wandering beggars who were unwilling or unable to work crowded into the towns for shelter. Competition for labour reduced the earnings of those who obtained agricultural employment, and high prices threw them into further distress. These continued on in their villages in the hope of better times when the *kharif* crops should ripen. Exposure and insufficient food during the abnormally wet month of August induced fevers and dysentery. Then followed an unusually unhealthy September, when doubtless, as the drought began to declare itself, the cultivators who would ordinarily have given food or employment tightened their hands and pockets, and the distress then assumed a more aggravated form. With the open weather of September some returned to the works, others too weak for work struggled into the towns, but many continued on. But the progress of the distress was necessarily a gradual one, and its effects could not be immediately apparent.
>
> Vital statistics cannot be collected and compiled from day to day, nor do deaths of this kind make themselves so soon known as deaths from epidemics. They are gradual, distributed over the whole area, not sudden and concentrated in particular localities. The death-rates computed at a rate of so many *per mille per annum* look most formidable in a statistical statement, but the highest rate of all (138 in Damoh in September) means during the month 11 or 12 deaths only per thousand, or two or three deaths in a village of 250 souls; that is to say, one or two deaths only above the normal in a village of that size. All this time work was available in the interior of the district, and gratuitous relief was being given in poor-houses, but the people did not come to such relief in any considerable

numbers. It may be said without fear of contradiction that the people themselves were as much deceived as the officers of the Government by the prospects of a good *kharif*; they preferred to struggle on till the time of plenty came, and it was not till late in September that the prospects of a good crop were definitely dissipated.

The reluctance to come on work was nowhere more marked than among the aboriginal castes of Mandla, Seoni and Damoh. Residing as they do in hilly and forest country, where it is almost impossible to find any local village works of improvement which can be undertaken, there is no resource but to offer them road-work in their neighbourhood. This was done in Damoh, but they would not come; the same in Seoni; and in Mandla the numbers were very small. The experience now gained seems to show that a test-work is of little use where aboriginals are concerned. Distress must have reached an acute stage before they will leave their forests to work on the roads.

But in addition to these causes mortality was undoubtedly swelled by the wandering spirit which took possession of the labouring poor. Discharged from a poor-house, they would often not go to work, but would resume their begging habits, consume uncooked food, and before long many died or found their way back again to the poor-house in a condition worse than when they originally entered it.

Mortality of 1897.

193. Turning now to the mortality statistics of 1897, three periods must be distinguished. There was, first, that embraced in the opening months of the year, when the death-rates, except in particular districts, were not unusually heavy, and when wandering, especially from the Native States across the border (*vide supra*, paragraphs 57 to 59), was the chief cause of the deaths due to famine. Secondly, in the latter end of February and beginning of March an epidemic of cholera set in, which reached its maximum in June (that month alone accounting for 21,125 out of 57,131 deaths), and gradually subsided with the progress of the monsoon. Thirdly, the rainy months, July to October and November, when fevers were extraordinarily prevalent. During this time also deaths from dysentery and diarrhœa attained their maximum.

It will be necessary to examine the mortality in each Division of the Province with reference to these special periods, and to show how the measures of relief were directed to cope with the adverse influences of the season.

Mortality of cold weather.

194. The districts of Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore were those in which the stress of famine first became acute in the closing months of 1896. They were peculiarly exposed to the incursion of wanderers from the Native States to the north; and they were at the time when the year opened, in common with the adjacent States and the Bundelkhand Districts of the North-Western Provinces,* suffering from an epidemic of fever which caused a much larger proportion of deaths than usual at that season.

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* The districts of the North-Western Provinces which lie nearest to the Vindhyan districts of the Central Provinces are Jhansi, Hamirpur, and Banda, and the following are the death-rates (*per mille per mensem*) shown against them in the end of 1896 and beginning of 1897 :—

Month.	Jhansi.		Hamirpur.		Banda.	
	Total.	Fevers.	Total.	Fevers.	Total.	Fevers.
October 1896 ...	7·37	5·24	8·06	6·85	4·20	5·32
November ,, ...	5·86	4·03	6·13	5·12	4·39	3·45
December ,,	5·32	3·42	5·35	4·34	4·71	3·45
January 1897 ...	4·92	3·02	5·03	4·15	5·10	3·75
February ,, ...	4·16	2·51	3·64	2·97	4·81	3·87
March ,, ...	3·73	2·23	3·41	2·01	5·09	3·57

Compare, for the last months of 1896, the rates for the adjacent Central Provinces districts (the rates for the first three months of 1897 are given above in the text) :—

Month.	Saugor.		Damoh.		Jubbulpore.	
	Total.	Fevers.	Total.	Fevers.	Total.	Fevers.
October 1896 ...	8·12	6·53	10·16	7·38	7·43	4·49
November ,, ...	6·25	5·17	7·83	5·60	5·34	3·04
December ,, ...	5·60	4·43	5·84	3·98	5·22	3·28

The following figures show, for each district, the total mortality, the mortality from fevers and cholera, and the number on relief of all kinds on the last day of the month preceding, for the first three months of the year:—

Months.	Death-rate *per mille*.			Numbers on all forms of relief at close of month preceding.	Numbers on village relief	Percentage of total population on relief of all kinds.
	Total.	From cholera.	From fever.			
		Saugor.				
January ...	5·26	0·04	4·12	25,048	437	4·23
February ...	4·91	0·23	3·36	36 962	4 428	6·24
March ...	4·38	0·35	2·98	37,182	6,083	6·28
		Damoh.				
January ..	5·54	0·01	3·59	5,632	...	1·7
February ...	4·35	0·15	2·97	22,280	...	6·9
March ...	5·75	1·61	2·74	21,613	4,481	6·6
		Jubbulpore.				
January ...	7·76	0·02	2·19	41 509	...	5·55
February ...	9·14	0·34	2·97	91 513	1,842	12·23
March ...	7·06	0 50	2 81	75 875	13,721	10 14

Thus, while in Saugor and Damoh the death-rates (but for cholera in the latter district in March) show a progressive decrease with the extension of relief operations, and compare on the whole not unfavourably with those in the adjacent districts of the North-Western Provinces, in Jubbulpore the rates suddenly rose, from 5·24 in November and 5·22 in December, to the highest figures which they attained during the famine period. This was wholly due to the invasion of the northern part of the district, in the first three months of the year, by crowds of starving immigrants from the adjoining States of Baghelkhand and Bundelkhand. The mortality was concentrated in the northern or Murwara Tahsil, the head-quarters of which, a thriving town, is situated on the Great Northern Road but eight miles from the border. The relief centres in this tract were thronged by many thousands of natives of Rewa, Maihar, Panna and other Native States, and the poor-house at Murwara was chiefly peopled by immigrants. Unfortunately, in January Mr. A. C. Duff, the Deputy Commissioner of Jubbulpore, died, and his successor, Mr. Fox-Strangways, had an arduous task in reducing the undisciplined crowds which gathered at these centres to order. This was gradually accomplished, and it will be seen from subsequent figures that while relief was rapidly expanded, the death-rate was gradually brought under control.

The following are the figures for the three Nerbudda Valley districts for the same three months (as in the case of Jubbulpore, the two divisions into which the small district of Nimar has been divided in the statistical tables have been thrown into one):—

Month.	Death-rate *per mille*.			Numbers on relief at close of month preceding.		
	Total.	From cholera.	From fevers.	Total.	Village relief only.	Percentage of total population on relief.
		Narsinghpur.				
January ...	6·52	*Nil.*	3·35	6,998	*Nil.*	1·90
February ...	4·01	0·01	2·16	25 436	276	6 93
March ...	4·03	0·31	2·26	20,438	324	5·56
		Hoshangabad.				
January ...	4·46	0·02	2 84	24 312	*Nil.*	4·83
February ...	3·18	0 01	1·95	36 360	*Nil.*	7·29
March ...	2·91	0·05	1·87	28,830	*Nil.*	5·78
		Nimar.				
January ...	3·48	*Nil.*	2 86	536	*Nil.*	·18
February ...	2 91	*Nil.*	2·50	753	*Nil.*	·26
March ...	3·30	0·15	2·57	389	*Nil.*	·13

Narsinghpur began the year with a high death-rate, due, as in the adjacent Vindhyan districts, chiefly to fever, but partly also, as in Jubbulpore, to the immigration of emaciated persons from Bhopal. The rapid expansion of relief in this district and Hoshangabad, however, soon overtook the mortality, and the rates quickly fell. In Nimar distress was and remained very slight, but the malarious character of the district, exhibited in the high mortality from fevers, kept the total death-rate high.

The following are the figures for the Satpura districts, among which Balaghat has also been included in view of the fact that its most distressed area was the Baihar Tahsil, forming part of the Satpura Plateau :—

Month.	Death-rate *per mille*.			Numbers on relief at close of month preceding.		
	Total.	From cholera.	From fevers.	Total.	Village relief.	Percentage of total population on relief.
		Mandla.				
January ...	3·87	*Nil.*	2·62	13,448	*Nil.*	3·9
February ...	7·06	1·54	3·36	17,394	*Nil.*	5·1
March ...	6·71	1·16	3·29	26,304	135	7·7
		Balaghat.				
January ...	4·86	0·09	3·66	4,029	*Nil.*	1·05
February ...	4·82	*Nil.*	3·51	6,124	*Nil.*	1·59
March ...	7·00	0·67	4·50	18,131	*Nil.*	4·72
		Seoni.				
January ...	5·26	*Nil.*	3·72	6,497	*Nil.*	1·75
February ...	4·38	*Nil.*	3·10	8,171	*Nil.*	2·20
March ...	4·44	0·36	2·77	8,691	*Nil.*	2·34
		Chhindwara.				
January ...	2·47	*Nil.*	1·50	1,974	*Nil.*	·48
February ...	2·10	0·04	1·09	7,834	287	1·92
March ...	2·47	0·07	1·44	9,549	202	2·34
		Betul.				
January ...	3·62	0·03	1·40	1,886	*Nil.*	·58
February ...	3·47	0·11	1·33	8,720	*Nil.*	2·66
March ...	4·90	0·39	1·89	15,798	508	4·89

Here the most striking fact, in those districts where the mortality was high, is the excessive prevalence of fever. (Betul shows less than would be expected from its climate and position: but "other causes" in this district bear a much larger proportion to the total than elsewhere, and doubtless include cases, such as pneumonia and other diseases due to chill, which are elsewhere lumped with fevers). The Chhindwara figures indicate no severe pressure. Those of Mandla and Balaghat, on the contrary, show great distress. In both districts relief was rapidly expanding in the course of the three months; but in all village relief was backward. It is doubtful, however, whether at this season of the year village relief would have been effective, as it is that in which, after the spring harvest has been reaped, the aboriginal classes scatter to the forests (*vide* Mr. Sharp's Note). In Mandla cholera began to prevail with severity in February, and was also destructive in March.

The following are the figures for the Nagpur country or Wainganga districts :—

Month.	Death-rate *per mille*.			Numbers on relief at close of month preceding.		
	Total.	From cholera.	From fevers.	Total.	Village relief.	Percentage to population.
			Nagpur.			
January	2·23	*Nil.*	1·25	2,694	*Nil.*	·36
February	1·83	0·01	1·08	1,383	*Nil.*	·18
March	1·96	0·03	1·15	1,691	*Nil.*	·22
			Wardha.			
January	2·11	0·02	1·18	251	*Nil.*	·06
February	1·73	0·02	0·95	*Nil.*	*Nil.*	*Nil.*
March	1·97	0·03	1·06	*Nil.*	*Nil.*	*Nil.*
			Chanda.			
January	2·03	*Nil.*	1·06	*Nil.*	*Nil.*	*Nil.*
February	1·69	*Nil.*	0·86	2,819	*Nil.*	·4
March	1·78	0·05	0·96	3,085	*Nil.*	·4
			Bhandara.			
January	3·49	0·20	2·71	9,467	*Nil.*	1·27
February	2·59	0·14	1·95	10,852	46	1·46
March	2·95	0·31	2·13	17,867	30	2·40

Here it is evident that in the first three districts there was nothing to cause anxiety. The first of the three months, as elsewhere, was marked by some prevalence of fever; but the rates were low. In Nagpur and Wardha there was no extensive recourse to relief, and in Chanda the relief given was only in a remote corner of the district (the Zamindari of Ambagarh Chauki) bordering on the Native States of Khairagarh and Nandgaon, and half the persons shown as relieved came from those States. In Bhandara distress was growing and mortality was higher, but not excessive; and the relief operations were being rapidly expanded to meet the needs of the people.

In Chhattisgarh it is unnecessary to give the statistics for Sambalpur, which at this time was quite free from distress. The following are those for Raipur and Bilaspur:—

Month.	Death-rate *per mille*.			Numbers on relief at close of month preceding.		
	Total.	From cholera.	From fevers.	Total.	Village relief.	Percentage of total population on relief.
			Raipur.			
January ...	2·70	*Nil.*	1·61	8,564	*Nil.*	0·54
February ...	2·18	0·02	1·19	9,936	*Nil.*	0·63
March ...	2·91	0·16	1·46	28,027	660	1·77
			Bilaspur.			
January ...	3·09	0·04	2·20	*Nil.*	*Nil.*	*Nil.*
February ...	2·68	0·13	1·79	6,509	*Nil.*	0·56
March ...	4·44	0·85	2·44	18,711	*Nil.*	6·11

Here also there was nothing in the Raipur figures to cause anxiety; and in Bilaspur the bulk of the mortality during the three months was ascribed, as elsewhere, to fever (the northern half of the district, consisting of mountainous and forest-clad country continuous with the Satpuras, is very malarious). In both districts the Deputy Commissioners were, on the 2nd February, urged to keep a close watch on the statistics of mortality, and to push on the organization of house-to-house relief in localities where emaciation or wandering were reported.

Mortality of hot weather: cholera.

195. The next period is that of the prevalence of cholera. Some parts of the Province, especially those, like Chhattisgarh, where the water-supply is drawn from tanks formed by impounding the local drainage, are particularly liable to epidemics of cholera, and the dry months of the hot weather, when the supply is at its worst and scantiest, are those when the disease is most prevalent and destructive. The probability of the outbreak of cholera at this season had been foreseen, and in the orders regarding relief-camps, issued in the Public Works Department on the 26th December 1896, the most careful instructions were laid down for the conservancy of the water-supply and the precautions to be taken against epidemics; the moving of the camp for at least five miles on the occasion of an outbreak was enjoined. On the 5th April, at the Chief Commissioner's instance, the Sanitary Commissioner issued further and more detailed instructions, which will be found at paragraph 7 of the appendix to this Report setting forth the medical arrangements during the famine. In addition to these precautions adopted at relief-camps and other famine institutions, the use of permanganate of potassium for disinfecting wells in villages where cholera prevailed was prescribed generally; and, so far as the absorption of the staff in famine work permitted, the services of vaccinators were used, as in ordinary times, to distribute cholera medicines.

On the whole the disease, though it invaded several of the relief-camps (notably in Narsinghpur, Mandla, Raipur and Bilaspur), was not specially prevalent in the relief institutions, and with isolated exceptions was remarkably absent from the poor-houses. Where it did break out among relief-workers, however, it not only caused much loss of life directly, but also led to the scattering of the famine-stricken, who fled in terror from the infected area, and thus placed themselves beyond the reach of relief. It cannot be doubted that during the cholera season many persons died from the effects of exposure and privation due to their own act in fleeing from the relief-camps, and in many cases (especially in Bilaspur) they contributed to spread the cholera over the country, and died of the disease by the roadside or a short distance off as they wandered about. Such results could not everywhere be avoided. In some cases the officer-in-charge, in others the Hospital Assistant at a relief camp, himself fell sick or died of cholera, and the terror was naturally intense. The Administration had to mourn the loss from this disease of Mr. H. H. Priest, Commissioner of Jubbulpore, and of Mr. C. O. Leefe, Executive Engineer, Chhattisgarh Division, both of whom contracted it while on inspection duty.

In the North-Western Provinces special measures, which have been described in Chapter VIII of the Lieutenant Governor's Resolution on the administration of famine relief during 1896 and 1897, were taken in March to deal with an outbreak of cholera in south Allahabad, the labourers on large relief camps being drafted to minor works in the neighbourhood of their own villages employing not more than 500 persons each. The Chief Commissioner anxiously considered, at the end of March, whether it was possible to adopt any such measure in this Province. The greater distances of the villages from one another, and the extreme paucity of suitable local works, besides the difficulty, with more slender and less efficient establishments, of maintaining proper supervision over such works could they have been started, appeared to him to be insuperable obstacles to the introduction of the system here; and it was accordingly decided to trust to the precautions already referred to above, and adhere to the system of large works.

196. The following figures show the mortality during the months when cholera was severe:—

	District.	Month.	Death-rate per mille.					Numbers on relief at close of preceding month		
			Total.	From cholera.	During cholera.	From fevers.	From bowel disease.	All forms.	Village relief.	Percentage on total population of district.
Vindhyan Districts.	Saugor	April	5·14	0·93	4·21	3·16	0·32	41,699	7,874	7·04
		May	7·48	1·64	5·84	4·17	0·70	45,544	9,696	7·69
		June	10·37	1·79	8·58	6·02	1·12	58,341	10,769	9·85
		July	8·26	0·20	8·06	5·91	1·07	36,040	8,715	6·09
	Damoh	April	4·99	0·87	4·12	2·81	0·90	32,646	6,141	10·04
		May	4·96	1·15	3·81	2·59	0·76	40,346	7,377	12·41
		June	8·72	2·66	6·06	4·26	1·14	53,499	10,921	16·15
		July	4·80	0·14	4·66	2·66	1·19	45,527	11,256	14·08
	Jubbulpore	April	5·36	0·38	5·00	2·30	1·62	96,762	17,839	12·95
		May	6·31	0·98	5·33	2·61	1·47	95,535	17,373	12·77
		June	5·71	0·63	5·08	2·46	1·35	81,644	18,418	10·91
		July	4·38	0·10	4·28	1·87	1·26	48,081	17,849	6·43
Nerbudda Valley.	Narsinghpur	April	8·18	3·60	4·58	2·73	0·89	46,665	378	13·73
		May	7·41	2·09	5·32	3·02	1·01	24,149	592	6·58
		June	6·48	1·04	5·44	3·16	1·33	52,152	1,143	14·21
		July	6·26	0·38	5·88	3·00	1·79	28,916	2,175	7·87
	Hoshangabad	April	2·92	0·04	2·88	1·78	0·43	51,969	Nil.	10·42
		May	7·75	2·75	5·00	2·80	1·38	54,136	1,637	10·86
		June	6·15	1·60	4·50	2·98	0·87	60,765	2,255	12·18
		July	4·32	0·08	4·24	2·73	0·93	29,975	2,543	6·00
	Nimar	April	3·89	0·19	3·69	2·96	0·17	538	152	·11
		May	4·78	0·03	4·75	4·10	0·11	644	165	·22
		June	6·97	1·49	5·48	4·63	0·31	865	406	·31
		July	5·61	0·30	5·31	4·50	0·22	875	493	·30
Satpura Districts.	Mandla	April	4·21	0·24	3·97	2·48	0·81	24,376	214	7·2
		May	7·18	2·01	5·17	2·90	1·34	30,141	1,368	8·8
		June	10·52	3·59	6·93	3·43	3·44	32,449	1,880	9·6
		July	16·43	2·20	14·23	6·78	5·13	27,195	2,268	5·1
	Balaghat	April	6·67	0·91	5·76	4·06	0·97	26,643	Nil.	7·47
		May	8·80	2·06	6·74	4·61	1·32	53,530	6,962	13·36
		June	9·91	1·84	8·07	5·86	1·36	62,285	8,300	16·24
		July	8·54	0·24	8·30	6·58	0·99	40,769	9,015	10·63

	District.	Month.	Death-rate per mille.					Numbers on relief at close of preceding month.		
			Total.	From cholera.	Deducting cholera.	From fevers.	From bowel disease.	All forms.	Village relief.	Percentage on total population of district.
Satpura Districts.—(*Concld.*)	Seoni	April	4·23	0·80	*3·43*	2·25	0·60	9,570	*Nil.*	2·58
		May	4·62	1·02	*3·60*	2·35	0·56	14,765	432	3·98
		June	6·86	1·90	*4·96*	3·23	1·06	16,417	1,977	4·42
		July	8·28	0·22	*8·06*	5·10	1·74	11,220	2,067	3·02
	Chhindwara	April	2·57	*Nil.*	*2·57*	1·53	0·12	10,688	190	2·60
		May	2·83	0·82	*2·01*	1·14	0·25	14,050	207	3·44
		June	5·00	2·78	*2·22*	1·16	0·25	18,121	474	4·44
		July	5·24	0·83	*4·41*	3·43	0·51	15,861	518	3·89
	Betul	April	4·30	0·86	*3·44*	1·33	0·26	9,634	712	2·95
		May	3·63	0·70	*2·93*	1·05	0·23	11,583	1,299	3·58
		June	6·30	2·09	*4·21*	1·62	0·48	20,619	1,652	6·38
		July	7·44	0·98	*6·46*	2·79	0·53	8,893	1,978	2·78
Wainganga Districts.	Nagpur	April	2·67	0·33	*2·34*	1·39	0·13	5,548	*Nil.*	·73
		May	4·54	1·10	*3·44*	2·03	0·16	10,059	Nil.	1·33
		June	4·83	0·85	*3·98*	2·48	0·15	18,192	*Nil.*	2·40
		July	3·92	0·28	*3·64*	1·99	0·54	15,640	*Nil.*	2·06
	Wardha	April	2·64	0·15	*2·49*	1·48	0·13	*Nil.*	*Nil.*	*Nil.*
		May	4·23	0·79	*3·44*	1·84	0·29	*Nil.*	*Nil.*	Nil.
		June	5·59	1·41	*4·18*	2·29	0·44	4,463	Nil.	1·15
		July	3·99	0·19	*3·80*	2·20	0·31	2,095	*Nil.*	·52
	Chanda	April	2·83	0·80	*2·03*	1·05	0·06	3,235	*Nil.*	·5
		May	3·15	0·71	*2·44*	1·12	0·06	300	*Nil.*	·04
		June	3·60	0·75	*2·85*	1·40	0·14	185	*Nil.*	·03
		July	3·60	0·94	*2·66*	1·51	0·11	83	Nil.	..
	Bhandara	April	2·87	0·42	*2·45*	1·97	0·10	14,408	236	1·94
		May	4·47	1·00	*3·47*	2,80	0·22	16,670	811	2·24
		June	7·02	1·81	*5·21*	4·32	0·37	41,979	3,287	5·65
		July	5·48	0·83	*4·65*	3·96	0·23	25,737	4,539	3·46
Chhattisgarh.	Raipur	April	3·57	0·51	*3·06*	1·54	0·22	62,081	840	3·91
		May	8·18	3·73	*4·45*	2·24	0·48	107,237	2,404	6·77
		June	9·92	4·38	*5·54*	3·03	0·63	106,189	8,047	6·70
		July	7·69	0·86	*6·83*	4·05	0·80	64,915	9,737	4·09
	Bilaspur	April	4·72	1·09	*3·63*	2·46	0·19	24,146	3,892	2·07
		May	7·36	2·03	*5·33*	3·53	0·35	36,433	6,984	3·12
		June	12·24	4·63	*7·61*	5·08	0·61	63,264	19,097	5·43
		July	10·10	0·73	*9·27*	7·31	0·80	76,226	35,764	6·55

Comparison of Districts.

The third column of the statement gives the total of the residuary mortality, deducting the cases of cholera. It will be seen that in almost every case, after an outbreak of cholera, the mortality recorded from other diseases rose remarkably. The fourth and fifth columns show of what this residuary mortality was composed. It will be observed that (as reported) it was due principally to fevers. The latter half of June and the whole of July, which synchronised with the first burst of the monsoon, were specially marked by heavy fever mortality, particularly in Saugor, Nimar, Mandla, Balaghat, Seoni, Bhandara, Raipur and Bilaspur. There was the sudden change from extreme drought to excessive moisture, from great heat to comparative coolness, tending to produce chills, which the weakened and scantily-clothed frames of the sufferers from continued privation were unable to resist. Besides fevers, bowel disease began with the advent of the rains to become more prevalent and fatal. It reached its maximum in Mandla in July, with the terrible mortality of 5·13 *per mille* under this head alone. The causes are very clearly explained in Mr. Sharp's "Note on famine relief in Mandla," appended to this Report, to which reference has already several times been made, and which should be carefully studied as affording the key to the excessive mortality of this season and the rains, not only in Mandla but among the aboriginal population everywhere throughout the Province.

The coincidence of the appearance of cholera, after some months of a low mortality kept well in check by the operations of relief, with a sudden rise in the death-rates from other causes, may be well illustrated by the case of the adjacent districts of Narsinghpur and Hoshangabad. In the former district the rates for February and March were 4·01 and 4·03, of which 2·16 and 2·26 respectively were due to fevers. In April cholera became epidemic, the mortality from it being 3·60 *per mille*; the total mortality suddenly more than doubled, reaching 8·18, and the fever mortality rose to 2·73. Cholera continued throughout May, with a death-rate of 2·09 *per mille*; and fevers again advanced to 3·02. After this, while cholera rapidly abated, the fever death-rate grew (with a very slight fall in July) till it reached its maximum in October. Hoshangabad escaped epidemic cholera till May; its death-rates in February, March and April were low, 3·18, 2·91 and 2·92 respectively. Then in May a cholera epidemic set in, which gave a mortality from this cause of 2·75, and a total rate of 7·75—the residuum of 5·00 being made up of an increased fever mortality of 2·80, and mortality due to bowel disease of 1·38.

Relief operations during this period.

The last three columns of the statement exhibit the growth of the numbers on relief during this period. Until the end of June, when the arrival of the monsoon took great numbers of the relief-workers back to their villages for agricultural labour, the growth of the population in receipt of relief was steady*; and there was no reason to think that the relief operations were inadequate, or failed to meet the needs of the distressed. The mortality, apart from cholera, until the rains broke was not excessive for a year of acute famine. The whole famine staff were working their utmost to extend work and village relief; the cholera was looked upon as a calamitous but temporary visitation, and it was hoped that when it passed away according to custom with the extension of the monsoon, the rates would sink again, the distressed find employment in their villages with the resumption of agricultural labour, and the worst of the famine be past. This was the expectation entertained also in other Provinces, and there, or at any rate in most parts of them, it appears to have been justified by the event. In the Central Provinces it was far otherwise, as the figures now to be given for the third period will show.

* The single exception is Narsinghpur, where numbers fell from 44,665 at the end of March to 24,149 at the end of April; this was wholly due to the temporary scattering of relief-workers on a number of works which were invaded by cholera. By the end of May numbers had again risen to 52,152.

197. The statement below exhibits the mortality from August to the end of the year:—

	District.	Month.	Death-rate per mille.					Numbers on relief at close of preceding month.		
			Total.	From cholera.	Deducting cholera.	From fevers.	From bowel disease.	All forms.	Village relief.	Percentage on total population of district.
Vindhyan Districts.	Saugor	August	11·62	0·02	11·60	8·33	1·55	34,029	7,621	6·42
		September	11·25	Nil.	11·25	8·30	1·35	30,241	12,514	5·11
		October	8·47	Nil.	8·43	6·62	0·77	27,258	21,084	6·29
		November	6·06	Nil.	6·06	4·97	0·74	27,677	19,512	4·67
		December	4·05	Nil.	4·05	2·93	0·25	13,526	9,911	3·12
	Damoh	August	7·26	0·43	6·83	3·40	2·21	50,583	11,904	15·56
		September	6·78	Nil.	6·78	3·75	1·74	29,674	14,599	9·13
		October	5·84	Nil.	5·84	3·74	1·04	32,985	15,246	10·15
		November	4·49	Nil.	4·49	3·00	0·60	19,373	13,068	5·96
		December	3·35	Nil.	3·35	2·10	0·57	6,566	4,273	2·20
	Jubbulpore	August	5·60	0·03	5·57	2·52	1·84	76,980	28,421	10·27
		September	5·96	Nil.	5·96	2·88	1·82	67,751	32,392	9·06
		October	6·48	0·01	6·47	3·59	1·50	58,656	24,526	7·84
		November	4·93	Nil.	4·93	2·85	0·92	31,404	22,772	4·19
		December	3·42	Nil.	3·42	1·98	0·50	17,286	13,827	2·31
Nerbudda Valley.	Narsingpur	August	7·24	0·05	7·19	4·28	1·60	32,177	7,354	8·76
		September	7·86	0·01	7·85	4·33	1·93	36,915	12,307	10·05
		October	9·87	Nil.	9·87	6·57	1·80	27,890	13,815	7·59
		November	6·75	Nil.	6·75	4·11	1·37	12,763	9,044	3·97
		December	3·85	Nil.	3·85	2·27	0·65	8,034	5,118	2·19
	Hoshangabad	August	7·02	0·13	6·89	4·28	1·86	47,326	4,881	9·49
		September	7·73	0·01	7·72	5·02	1·79	42,714	6,181	8·56
		October	8·23	Nil.	8·23	5·65	1·73	36,514	7,863	7·32
		November	5·99	Nil.	5·99	4·15	1·13	11,490	8,866	2·30
		December	4·11	Nil.	4·11	2·83	0·61	6,031	5,989	1·25
	Nimar	August	7·33	0·56	6·77	5·51	0·76	1,833	635	·64
		September	7·90	0·29	7·61	6·24	0·63	2,810	1,217	·98
		October	5·62	Nil.	5·62	4·84	0·32	3,182	1,589	1·11
		November	3·92	Nil.	3·92	3·38	0·14	2,341	2,058	·82
		December	3·87	Nil.	3·87	3·05	0·17	1,942	1,715	·68
Satpura Districts.	Mandla	August	16·66	0·54	16·12	7·71	4·61	19,682	2,418	5·8
		September	11·59	0·27	11·32	5·67	3·47	33,002	14,649	9·7
		October	8·04	0·02	8·02	4·46	2·29	33,043	20,596	9·7
		November	3·74	0·05	3·69	2·44	0·53	25,747	22,158	7·6
		December	2·34	Nil.	2·34	1·55	0·29	18,950	17,757	5·6
	Balaghat	August	11·10	0·21	10·89	8·44	1·50	54,056	10,005	14·10
		September	9·91	0·13	9·78	7·37	1·35	45,065	11,926	11·75
		October	6·68	Nil.	6·68	5·37	0·74	44,513	13,203	11·61
		November	4·52	Nil.	4·52	3·83	0·33	25,337	12,648	6·61
		December	4·16	0·05	4·11	3·57	0·15	13,076	6,782	3·15
	Seoni	August	12·29	0·13	12·16	7·70	2·62	12,348	4,600	3·33
		September	8·63	0·02	8·61	5·69	1·87	17,644	8,994	4·75
		October	5·92	Nil.	5·92	4·54	0·80	19,394	13,195	5·23
		November	4·07	Nil.	4·07	3·16	0·44	13,178	9,102	3·56
		December	2·58	Nil.	2·58	2·10	0·16	6,842	5,281	1·84

	District.	Month.	Death-rates *per mille*.					Numbers on relief at close of preceding month.		
			Total.	From cholera.	*Deducting cholera.*	From fevers.	From bowel disease.	All forms.	Village relief.	Percentage on total population of district.
Satpura Districts.—(*Contd.*)	Chhindwara	August	5·10	0·22	*4·88*	2·61	0·89	19,627	740	4·82
		September	7·86	*Nil.*	*7·86*	4·52	1·41	17,659	1,461	4·33
		October	7·17	0·04	*7·13*	4·27	0·98	18,751	7,699	4·60
		November	4·78	*Nil.*	*4·78*	2·88	0·58	18,419	10,203	4·52
		December	4·29	*Nil.*	*4·29*	2·86	0·26	6,515	4,515	1·60
	Betul	August	11·76	0·25	*11·51*	5·04	0·87	12,834	2,500	3·94
		September	12·20	0·57	*11·63*	4·94	1·41	13,925	3,967	4·31
		October	8·20	0·16	*8·04*	3·26	1·14	26,092	15,974	8·07
		November	4·45	0·03	*4·42*	1·96	0·52	21,422	12,524	6·63
		December	3·25	*Nil.*	*3·25*	1·37	0·27	10,908	7,583	3·37
Wainganga Districts.	Nagpur	August	5·68	0·40	*5·28*	3·13	0·47	17,688	*Nil.*	2·33
		September	6·83	0·25	*6·58*	3·96	0·76	16,814	68	2·22
		October	6·85	0·03	*6·82*	4·62	0·56	15,874	752	2·09
		November	4·04	*Nil.*	*4·04*	3·33	0·36	10,733	3,157	1·42
		December	3·65	*Nil.*	*3·65*	2·35	0·18	8,025	2,020	1·06
	Wardha	August	6·24	0·19	*6·05*	3·42	0·86	2,521	*Nil.*	·63
		September	8·96	0·11	*8·85*	5·57	1·30	1,356	*Nil.*	·34
		October	9·38	0·01	*9·37*	6·02	1·33	2,583	267	·64
		November	6·56	*Nil.*	*6·56*	4·41	0·72	584	368	·15
		December	4·67	*Nil.*	*4·67*	3·16	0·35	823	767	·20
	Chanda	August	4·17	0·27	*3·90*	2·13	0·27	1,181	1,139	·2
		September	5·80	0·32	*5·48*	3·31	0·37	3,049	2,697	·4
		October	4·72	0·15	*4·57*	2·87	0·30	5,893	5,027	·9
		November	4·70	0·13	*4·57*	2·81	0·27	10,493	8,887	1·5
		December	3·52	0·[illegible]	*3·51*	2·08	0·19	1,893	1,689	·3
	Bhandara	August	6·42	0·18	*6·24*	5·27	0·35	34,610	6,486	4·66
		September	8·90	0·16	*8·74*	7·68	0·36	27,668	7,824	3·72
		October	6·56	0·02	*6·54*	5·71	0·30	36,682	12,523	4·94
		November	6·36	*Nil.*	*6·36*	5·77	0·14	27,001	16,287	3·63
		December	3·67	*Nil.*	*3·67*	3·21	0·05	9,371	7,485	1·26
Chhattisgarh Districts.	Raipur	August	10·32	0·21	*10·11*	6·91	1·43	67,358	10,989	4·25
		September	9·82	0·04	*9·78*	6·72	1·30	64,742	19,935	4·08
		October	9·30	0·04	*9·26*	6·77	1·10	81,425	30,989	5·14
		November	6·94	0·06	*6·88*	5·03	0·83	56,559	24,486	3·57
		December	4·39	0·02	*4·37*	3·15	0·57	11,900	9,588	·75
	Bilaspur	August	12·83	0·13	*12·70*	10·15	1·08	110,202	63,062	9·46
		September	13·09	0·10	*12·99*	9·41	1·62	138,489	75,318	11·04
		October	11·39	0·12	*11·27*	9·24	1·20	149,149	90,716	12·81
		November	8·43	*Nil.*	*8·43*	7·33	0·56	83,329	50,087	7·16
		December	6·14	0·01	*6·13*	5·31	0·35	11,179	7,586	·96

Monsoon mortality: fevers.

Cholera, it will be seen, either disappeared altogether or sank to trifling proportions. The residuary mortality, however, mounted to most alarming figures, and this was due everywhere, both in deeply distressed districts like Saugor, Narsinghpur, Hoshangabad, Mandla, Balaghat, Betul, Bilaspur and Raipur, and in districts where distress was much slighter, as Chhindwara, Nimar, Wardha, Nagpur and Chanda, to a general epidemic of fever. The suddenness with which the fever mortality rose greatly perplexed the officers of the Administration. Moving about constantly as they were among the people, some of them became aware of the fact that

the epidemic attacked not only the poor who had suffered from privation, but also to a much greater extent than usual the well-to-do and those in comparatively easy circumstances. This was reported, and the Chief Commissioner ordered, on the 27th October, that Deputy Commissioners and their Assistants should make careful local enquiries into the facts of the rains mortality, testing personally in the villages visited, with the help of the village watchman's record of deaths, the circumstances of the persons whose deaths were reported. The results of this enquiry, which embraced every district in the Province except Sambalpur, and examined the circumstances of a very large proportion of the total mortality, placed it apparently beyond doubt that the usual autumnal fevers had from some cause, altogether apart from the famine, been greatly aggravated in their fatality, and that a much larger proportion than usual of the general population, not affected by distress, had suffered from them. The reports of the Commissioners, which have been submitted to the Government of India, necessarily go into great detail on the subject, and it is difficult to summarise them. Perhaps the best means of enforcing their conclusions, arrived at quite independently upon the figures of this Province alone, is by pointing to precisely the same phenomena in immediately adjacent territories.

Comparison with North-Western Provinces.

198. In the North-Western Provinces a fever epidemic appears to have set in in September (somewhat later than in the Central Provinces), and to have continued severe when mortality from this cause was abating here. The death-rate was excessive, not only in localities, such as Bundelkhand, where the famine had been acute, but in parts of the Provinces where distress had been comparatively slight, as in the Agra Division, or even insignificant, as in Rohilkhand. The following figures of deaths from fever, so far as October and November are concerned, are comparable with those in the worst of the Central Provinces districts (except Mandla in August) during the monsoon period, and seem to point conclusively to an unusually severe and fatal epidemic :—

		Total.	From fevers.
September 1897.			
Bundelkhand Districts	Hamirpur	8·93	7·27
	Jalaun	9·34	7·53
	Jhansi	5·15	3·80
Agra Division	Agra	7·75	6·56
October 1897.			
Bundelkhand Districts	Hamirpur	9·89	8·48
	Jalaun	9·78	8·76
	Jhansi	5·64	4·32
Agra Division	Agra	12·44	11·29
	Muttra	8·37	8·13
	Etawa	8·33	7·96
Rohilkhand Division	Moradabad	7·21	6·37
	Bareilly	12·85	11·80
	Pilibhit	10·78	8·97
November 1897.			
Bundelkhand Districts	Hamirpur	6·60	5·61
	Jalaun	6·95	6·37
	Jhansi	4·74	3·59
Agra Division	Agra	9·22	8·5
	Muttra	7·73	7·53
	Etawa	7·46	6·92
Rohilkhand Division	Moradabad	6·01	5·62
	Bareilly	11·56	11·21
	Pilibhit	8·00	7·17

199. Another adjacent Province is Berar, which on the north marches with Nimar, Betul and Chhindwara, and on the east with Nagpur, Wardha and Chanda. It is believed that famine was not severe there, and that the numbers on relief never attained a high proportion of the population. The following are the death-rates from August to December of the six districts of Berar as published in the *Hyderabad Residency Orders*:—

Comparison with Berar.

District.	Month.	Total.	Death-rates		From fever.
			From cholera.	*Excluding cholera.*	
Amraoti	August ...	8·8	1·3	7·5	3·0
	September ...	9·5	·2	9·3	3·9
	October ...	8·7	...	8·7	4·0
	November ...	5·7	...	5·7	2·7
	December ...	3·8	...	3·8	1·8
Ellichpur	August ...	8·3	·4	7·9	3·0
	September ...	8·2	·04	8·16	3·2
	October ...	6·8	..	6·8	2·7
	November ...	4·6	...	4·6	1·9
	December ...	2·8	...	2·8	1·3
Akola	August ...	11·2	2·7	8·5	2·8
	September ...	9·9	·6	9·3	3·4
	October ...	6·2	·02	6·18	2·6
	November ...	3·6	...	3·6	1·8
	December ...	2·9	...	2·9	1·6
Wun	August ...	5·6	·1	5·5	3·9
	September ...	6·8	·2	6·6	4·8
	October ...	5·8	*Nil.*	5·8	4·5
	November ...	3·4	*Nil.*	3·4	2·7
	December ...	2·8	*Nil.*	2·8	2·2
Basim	August ...	7·8	1·2	6·6	2·4
	September ...	6·7	·3	6·4	2·3
	October ...	5·7	·1	5·6	2·4
	November ...	3·0	*Nil.*	3·0	1·4
	December ..	2·5	*Nil.*	2·5	1·3
Buldana	August ...	11·6	2·0	9·6	3·2
	September ...	11·5	·7	10·8	3·9
	October ...	6·6	·1	6·5	2·5
	November ...	3·1	*Nil.*	3·1	1·3
	December ...	2·9	*Nil.*	2·9	1·2

It will be noticed how closely the rise and fall of the total mortality in the Berar districts corresponds with the variations in the adjacent districts of the Central Provinces. It is true that, except in Wun, the mortality ascribed to fever does not bear so large a proportion to the whole; but there seems to be reason to believe that this is due only to a difference in the method of reporting,

a greater proportion of the Berar deaths being shown under "all other causes" than is the case in the Central Provinces. It is well known that the diagnosis of disease, when deaths are reported by an ignorant village watchman, cannot be depended on, and that various inflammatory diseases, especially pneumonia and other respiratory affections, are almost invariably classed as fever in the returns.

Comparison with Chutia Nagpur Division of Bengal.

200. The North-Western Provinces and Berar are the two Provinces of India in direct contact with the severely distressed portions of the Central Provinces. From Bengal we are cut off, on the north-east, by a belt of Feudatory States, regarding the vital statistics of which no information is at present accessible. Beyond these lie the districts of the Chutia Nagpur Division, the nearest of which to Jubbulpore and Bilaspur are Hazaribagh, Lohardaga and Palamau. The population of these districts is to a very large extent composed of aboriginal races such as are found in Jubbulpore and Bilaspur, the most numerous being the Kols. The vital statistics of these three districts, extracted below from the *Calcutta Gazette*, present precisely the same phenomena during the rainy season as the nearest parts of the Central Provinces, and confirm the conclusion that the cause of the mortality which then prevailed was one reaching far beyond the limits of this Province:—

District.	Month.	Death-rates *per mille*.			
		Total.	From cholera.	*Excluding cholera.*	From fever.
Hazaribagh	July	5·34	1·26	4·08	3·19
	August	10·51	3·09	7·42	6·12
	September	6·59	0·50	6·09	5·25
	October	4·96	0·07	4·89	4·37
	November	4·22	0·01	4·21	3·78
	December	2·46	0·005	2·455	2·22
Lohardaga	July	3·72	0·62	3·10	1·61
	August	12.53	5·16	7·37	3·63
	September	8·86	1·96	6·90	3·46
	October	4·25	0·18	4·07	2·40
	November	3·41	*Nil.*	3·41	2·00
	December	1·84	*Nil.*	1·84	0·98
Palamau	July	4·17	1·82	2·35	1·81
	August	6·43	2·20	4·23	3·52
	September	5·29	1·05	4·24	3·66
	October	3·91	0·15	3·76	3·34
	November	3·94	*Nil.*	3·94	3·53
	December	2·24	*Nil.*	2·24	1·94

Fever epidemic apart from Famine.

201. It would seem, therefore, unnecessary further to argue the question whether the whole of the deplorable mortality of the monsoon period was due to privation. No one can contend that to a great extent privation, producing a condition of weakness in which the constitution was unable to resist the adverse influences of the season, was not the indirect cause; but the fact that (as local investigation showed) large numbers of persons in comfortable circumstances succumbed, equally with the poor, to fever, coupled with the circumstance that the mortality from this cause was extremely heavy in districts, both within and without the Central Provinces, known to have been but slightly distressed,

seems to point irresistibly to the conclusion that the rainy season of 1897, in this part of India, was a period of exceptional unhealthiness apart from famine, and that the heavy mortality of the time is to be ascribed in the main to this cause, which it was beyond human power to remove.

Bowel disease.

Besides fevers, in the aboriginal areas dysentery and diarrhœa were exceptionally fatal, and were caused by the long use of a forest dietary without the customary addition of grain. The same phenomenon is distinctly apparent in the vital statistics of the Kol country of Chutia Nagpur during the same season.

Rapid recovery since close of Famine.

202. It is very remarkable how rapidly recovery took place with the reaping of an abundant autumn harvest, and with the return of healthier climatic conditions. The statement given above shows how in Mandla a mortality of 16·66 in August sank in November to one of 3·74 and in December to one of 2·34 *per mille*. The first three months of 1898 show, all over the Province, extremely low death-rates. In January the provincial death-rate was 2·41 *per mille*, exactly the decennial average; in only one district, Nimar, did it exceed 3 *per mille*. In February it was 1·80, against a decennial average of 2·27; in only six districts did it exceed 2 *per mille*. In March it was 1·78, against a decennial average of 2·68. The year has fortunately so far been free from the usual hot weather epidemics; should this immunity continue, and the rains be propitious, it may be hoped that by the end of 1898 the condition of the people will have again become normal, and the process of repairing the terrible losses of the Famine year have well advanced.

Relief operations during this period.

203. The last three columns of the statement in paragraph 197 show the course of relief during these months of deepest gloom. Work-relief continued, but village-relief became, in an increasing degree, the most effective and prevalent form. In some districts, as has already been admitted, too little was done in this way, or the relief was commenced later than it should have been; but on the whole it may be said that the penultimate column of the statement is a record of devoted and successful work, carried out under conditions of the greatest difficulty and discomfort, which not infrequently led to the break-down in health, and sometimes to the death of the officers engaged upon it.

Deaths due to starvation.

204. No reference has yet been made in this Chapter to deaths from starvation. The reason is that, in spite of reiterated and detailed instructions, it was found impossible to secure a satisfactory record of such deaths. Early in the Famine it was explained that deaths not obviously due wholly to disease or accident should be classified into deaths due to privation and those due to starvation, by the latter being meant those caused by actual want of food up to the time of death, and by the former those due to disease, but accelerated by insufficiency of food; and in all cases where starvation was reported as the cause the Police were directed to make enquiries into the circumstances. But in spite of clear instructions, for many months the two expressions "starvation" and "privation" continued to be confused; and it was thought inexpedient to be too strict in requiring an account of starvation deaths lest this should lead to their suppression, with the view to save themselves trouble, by the Police. Generally, however, it may be said that deaths attributed to starvation were those of wanderers, often unknown; while those set down to privation occurred chiefly in poor-houses, also chiefly among wanderers (often from Native States, other Provinces, or distant districts), who arrived or were brought to the relieving officer too late to save their lives. The exact numbers of either class can never be accurately known, and the figures available do not admit of useful examination. It may, however, be stated that deaths directly due to starvation rapidly fell with the extension of relief, and that even in the months when the mortality was worst the number of such deaths actually verified was small.

CHAPTER V.

FAMINE RELIEF IN THE FEUDATORY STATES.

Enumeration of Feudatory States.

205. To complete the account of the Famine in the Central Provinces it is necessary to give some description of the measures adopted in the Feudatory States which occupy so large an area on the provincial map.

These States number fifteen, of which fourteen are situated in Chhattisgarh, and one, Makrai, in the Hoshangabad District. *

The total area of the Chhattisgarh Feudatories is 29,280 square miles, and their total population 2,141,962. They enjoyed in 1896 a State income of over nineteen lakhs of rupees, and render an annual tribute of a little under two-and-a-half lakhs. Geographically they fall into four distinct groups :—

I.—Eastern States ...	... Kálahándi, Pátna, Sonpur, Rehrakhol, Bámra.
II.—Southern States ...	... Kánker, Bastar.
III.—North-east States ...	... Sákti, Ráigarh, Sárangarh.
IV.—Western States ...	... Káwardha, Chhuikhadán, Khairagarh, Nándgaon.

Relations of the Government with the Feudatory States.

206. Within these States the Government exercises only political control. The Chiefs are bound by their engagements to loyalty, to the payment of tribute (unless specially exempted), and to follow the advice of the Chief Commissioner and the officers who represent him. In the case of famine relief the action of Government is confined to urging the adoption of relief measures upon the rulers, if urging be required: financially it could accept no responsibility. But although its relations with the several States are political only, its influence is exerted directly in the case of States under Government management for minority, and indirectly in other States, in which the Diwan is usually a Government servant, experienced in British methods of administration, whose services are lent to the Chiefs to advise and assist them in the government of their territories. Over all of these is the Political Agent, who, subject to the control of the Commissioner of Chhattisgarh and the Chief Commissioner, maintains direct political relations with the several Chiefs, inspects their institutions, and keeps, without undue interference, a vigilant watch over their administration. Similar functions are performed in respect of the Makrai State by the Commissioner of the Nerbudda Division.

General characteristics of the States and their ability to administer famine relief.

207. The population of the Feudatory States is mainly agricultural, and comprises a large proportion of forest and hill tribes, some of which are not found elsewhere in the Province. Most of the Chiefships are still in a very undeveloped condition, but the advent of the railway in Chhattisgarh has given a great stimulus to progress, and the States of Khairagarh, Nandgaon and Chhuikhadan are fertile and populous, and contain a considerable admixture of the industrial and commercial classes. But although they are rapidly progressing, their revenues are not yet large enough to enable them to meet any great strain, and the resources of some of them were severely taxed by the calls which famine relief made. It was hence a fortunate circumstance that severe distress was principally confined to the States possessed of the most resources and credit. With these

* Unfortunately in the maps prepared to accompany this Report the area of the Makrai State has accidentally been coloured uniformly with the rest of the Hoshangabad District.

few words of explanation, we may pass to a brief account of the degree of distress experienced in each of the States, and the measures of relief adopted in them wherever such relief was found to be necessary. As might be expected, the information available is chiefly of a general character, and statistical details are not in every case forthcoming.

The Eastern States.

208. The first group, the Eastern States, closely resemble the Sambalpur District to which they are contiguous, and enjoyed, like that district, good crops. From a full report on the situation received in February 1897 from the Political Agent of the Feudatory States, it appeared that no distress existed in any of them. The remote position of all except Bamra prevented any serious rise of prices, and in Bamra, which is traversed in its northern portion by the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, the Chief prohibited exports in October. In Kalahandi and Patna rice was selling at 24 seers to the rupee. In Sonpur exports by cart to Sambalpur and by river down the Mahanadi caused a rise, but 16 seers were procurable even after exports had carried away a good deal of produce. In Rehrakhol the price was 28 seers, and in Bamra 22 seers. In none of these were any famine relief measures necessary.

Southern States.

Kanker.

209. Of the two Southern States, in Kanker, which adjoins the Dhamtari Tahsil of Raipur, the rainfall had been plentiful but unevenly distributed, and the rice crop was returned at about half the full. The Chief undertook some road work, released the *harra* (myrobalan) crop free to the people, and stored a quantity of grain for advances to ryots. Prices rose to 13 seers for common rice (11 seers in the tract just adjoining Raipur), but such distress as existed was partial, and no organized relief operations proved necessary. The Chief's prohibition of exports was reported by the Political Agent to have been ineffective.

Bastar.

In Bastar, a State which covers a very large area, 13,002 square miles, but is very thinly peopled, (population 310,884 or just under 24 to the square mile), the situation was closely examined by the Administrator, Colonel Fagan, who (though at first disposed to anticipate trouble owing to the activity of export trade) found no cause for serious anxiety. The crops were fair, rice yielding 10 annas, and prices, notwithstanding considerable exports, did not rise above 24 seers to the rupee, except in the Antagarh Tahsil where purchasers from the Kanker and Nandgaon States were numerous. Forest produce was exceptionally abundant, and, as in ordinary years, local labour for road work was procurable with difficulty. On one road from Dhamtari to Jagdalpur (the capital of the State), of which 42 miles were under construction, of 1,500 persons employed in February the great majority were labourers from Raipur and Balaghat. Altogether four works were in progress on ordinary contract terms, and no special famine relief was found necessary; but the Administrator made purchases of grain from State funds in certain parts of the State where there seemed to be a risk that seed grain might be scanty, or that an emergency might possibly arise. This State was also able from its surplus funds to assist with loans some of the other States, the finances of which did not admit of relief operations.

North-east States.

210. The next group, the North-east States, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, did not fare so well as the States of the two groups already referred to. Crops were poor, and high prices caused distress, which was not, however, of an acute kind.

Sakti.

Sakti comprises an area of only 138 square miles, with a population of 25,374 and an income of about Rs. 27,000. The Chief showed himself anxious to do all in his power to relieve distress, and spent for this purpose all his balance, as well as Rs. 11,000 borrowed from the Bastar State. The deepening of five tanks undertaken from the funds of the State, supplemented by private tank-work in fifteen villages, afforded employment. Minor forest produce was conceded free; and a poor-house was

opened which by the end of August contained 110 inmates. Rupees 4,000 were allotted to this State from the Charitable Fund, which were expended principally in advances for seed, but partly in gifts of clothes and blankets to paupers.

Raigarh.

Raigarh has an area of 1,486 square miles and a population of 168,000, with an income of Rs. 1,30,000. Such distress as existed in this State was on the whole due more to high prices than to failure of harvests, which were returned at from 8 to 12 annas. In February rice was selling at from 15 to 16 seers to the rupee. The Chief at first prohibited exports altogether, but afterwards on the advice of the Political Agent rescinded this order. He, however, put an export duty of 2 annas a bag on exports of rice from his State, a tax with which, in view of its lightness, the Chief Commissioner did not think it necessary to interfere, though he intimated his disapproval of the step taken. This tax was also subsequently withdrawn. No large relief measures were necessary, as the *mahua* crop was an exceptionally good one, and some large timber contracts given out during the year provided employment for a number of people in felling timber (in June 2,476 were employed in this way). But tank works were opened in five places, and advances were made to landholders with the object of employment being given to local labour on similar works. The State was also allotted Rs. 2,500 from the Charitable Fund. The Chief Commissioner visited Raigarh in July and satisfied himself of the adequacy of the measures taken.

Sarangarh.

Sarangarh has an area of 540 square miles, a population of 83,000, and a revenue of from Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 70,000. The State is under Government management.

The distress was not of a serious character; some ordinary road work in progress in the interior of the State had not attracted labourers; and on the opening of a tank work at Sarangarh itself in April, it was soon found that the bulk of the 2,500 persons whom it employed were drawn from Raipur and Bilaspur. These were in due course drafted to the Government relief works in the districts to which they belonged, and with an outbreak of cholera, and the fall of rain which induced many to return to their villages, the numbers had dwindled by the end of June to 70 persons, and the work was then closed. A poor-house had also in the mean time been opened, and the average numbers maintained in it from April to August were 160. At one time the mortality in this poor-house was large, but by the end of August the inmates were sufficiently strong to return to their villages. The pecuniary resources of the State had to be supplemented by a grant of Rs. 4,000 from the Charitable Fund and a loan of Rs. 5,000 from Bastar.

The Western States.

211. It was only in the Western States, which are much interlaced with the British districts of Raipur and Bilaspur and shared their misfortunes, that real famine had to be encountered. These are:—

	Area, square miles.	Population.	Revenue in 1896.
			Rs.
Kawardha	798	91,813	1,09,054
Chhuikhadan	154	36,288	54,098
Khairagarh	931	181,184	2,67,142
Nandgaon	871	183,866	3,12,025

Kawardha.

In Kawardha, as in the neighbouring areas of Bilaspur and Balaghat, crops had been bad for two seasons before the failure of 1896-97, and the effect of that failure was consequently accentuated. Works were started and poor-houses opened in two places in October, and

by the end of 1896 there were over 1,000 persons on relief-works. By the end of March 1897 work was going on in seven places, the numbers employed being 1,289; which subsequently rose, by the end of April, to 1,859. By the end of June the return of agriculturists to their villages brought down numbers to 1,115, and some of the works were closed; and by the end of August the numbers had fallen to 559. Poor-house relief was given in March to 169 and by the end of June to 720. The average monthly numbers relieved were 436. House-to-house gratuitous relief was distributed on an average to about 200 people. All forms of relief included, the numbers relieved in each month averaged 1,700, and at one time amounted to 3 per cent. of the total population.

In addition to direct relief of the kinds described, edible forest produce was granted free to the people; and for the benefit of the wilder tribes *dahya* cultivation (patch cultivation by axe and fire) was permitted temporarily in certain inferior forest areas. Agricultural loans to the amount of Rs. 20,000 were distributed, and aid was given to a number of distressed weavers. Under the effect of these measures, involving increased expenditure and decreased revenue, the financial resources of the State required to be supplemented by a loan of Rs. 30,000 from the Bastar surplus. An allotment from the Charitable Fund of Rs. 5,000 was also received.

Chhuikhadan.

212. In the small but populous State of Chhuikhadan little information was forthcoming of the circumstances of the people until after the death of the late Chief, which occurred in December 1896. His son and successor reported in February that the rice and *kodon* crops had failed, yielding respectively only 2 annas and 4 annas in the rupee. Further enquiries showed that the failure had been exaggerated; the prices of wheat and rice were respectively $12\frac{1}{2}$ and $11\frac{1}{4}$ seers to the rupee; and any extensive relief measures did not appear necessary. Later on, however, prices rose considerably, and a sum of Rs. 1,500 was spent on some small works in the capital of the State, the numbers relieved being returned at a little over 100 persons. Some small tank works were opened in the hot weather, and a poor-house was established, the average numbers maintained being also about 100. At the same time *takávi* advances of Rs. 7,000 for seed-grain were given out to cultivators from the State funds, and an allotment of Rs. 3,750 for the same purpose, as well as for the purchase of clothes and blankets for the poor-house inmates, was received from the Charitable Fund. The report of the Political Agent in June showed that adequate measures had been taken to meet the situation, though fears had at one time been felt that the relief provided was insufficient.

Khairagarh.

213. The Chief of Khairagarh, ably assisted by his Diwan, Khan Bahadur Maulavi Muhammad Husain, was early in the field with measures of relief. The State, which borders the eastern zamindaris of Bhandara, was chiefly affected in its forest tracts. In the open country a good deal of the rice crop was saved by irrigation, and a fair spring crop added to the food supply. Road and tank works were opened in the autumn of 1896, and by the close of the year the numbers on them had reached 1,000. Two poor-houses and a small orphanage were also established, the numbers maintained in which gradually rose from 128 in October 1896 to 274 in February 1897. Forest dues were largely reduced, and suspensions of revenue granted. In June the numbers on works had risen to 1,700, and local works, undertaken by well-to-do landholders, afforded employment to 1,400 persons. Gratuitous relief in poor-houses was being administered to nearly 300 paupers and orphans. At the same time liberal seed-grain advances, in value between Rs. 40,000 and Rs. 50,000, were distributed from State funds, and of Rs. 5,500 allotted from the Charitable Fund, the greater portion was utilised for grants of food-grain to the poorer cultivators to keep them in health and strength until their crops could ripen. The result of all these measures was that the people returned to their villages and the land was fully sown. By the end of August the number of relief-workers had fallen to 418, and it was shortly afterwards found possible to close the works. Poor-house relief was however extended, and all unfit for work (611 at the end of August) were thus supported. With these wise and liberal measures the period of stress was tided over. The State spent of its funds without stint, and ultimately was compelled to borrow from the

Bastar State the sum of Rs. 35,000 in order to pay the first instalment of its tribute, a temporary accommodation only, but indicative of the fact that relief measures had not been restricted for the sake of economy.

Nandgaon.

214. The circumstances of Nandgaon were very similar to those of Khairagarh. The rice crop on low lands had been partially saved, and *kodon* gave half the average outturn. In November 1896, 16 seers of rice were procurable for the rupee, and acute distress was nowhere visible. A poor-house was opened at Nandgaon for the distribution of cooked rice, but at first the only applicants were professional mendicants and lepers. Three works were already in progress, and four more were added to the list as the season wore on, and distress advanced. The section of the road from Ambagarh Chauki, in Chanda, to Nandgaon which falls within the borders of the State was taken up in February at the request of the Deputy Commissioner of Chanda, who drafted on to it 1,000 subjects of the State whom he had found working on the Chanda section. This work was the largest of those undertaken, and cost Rs. 15,000. In addition, two tank works were opened for a time. In April the numbers on works reached 4,463, and the average numbers employed over the whole period exceeded 2,000. As distress increased the poor-house population rose, the largest number of inmates (August 1897) being 1,291. The poor-house is reported to have been well managed, and to the large number of children collected there, between 500 and 600, clothing was distributed. The allotment to this State from the Charitable Fund was Rs. 6,000. The illness of the Raja, which unhappily terminated fatally in the middle of the year, was the cause why no such detailed examination of the circumstances of the people and of the measures of relief adopted as had been drawn up by the Chief of Khairagarh was submitted from this State.

General remarks regarding the Chhattisgarh Feudatories

215. Generally it may be said that the rulers of these Feudatory States, wherever they were in control of their own administration, were not slow to recognize their duties towards their distressed subjects; and where, owing to the minority of the Chiefs, the Government was managing the State, as in Kawardha and Sarangarh, the necessary measures were taken by the Superintendents under the orders of the Political Agent and the Commissioner of Chhattisgarh. In Bastar the energy of the Administrator, Colonel Fagan, and the precautions which he adopted, have already been mentioned.

Action taken in Makrai.

216. The Makrai State alone remains to be dealt with. It comprises an area of 155 square miles and a population of 18,459, and enjoys a revenue of about Rs. 60,000. The Chief during the early part of the year started some small works at the head-quarters of his State, where gratuitous relief was also distributed; and for his wilder people living among the hills he organized shooting parties, employing as large a number as possible as beaters, a system of relief which, if somewhat novel, was no doubt useful to the Gonds and Korkus. On the works and gratuitous relief the Chief has returned an expenditure of Rs. 2,224, and the amount disbursed by him in wages to beaters during his shooting trips also amounted to about Rs. 2,000. These were the steps taken before the rains; when the monsoon set in the former class of relief continued at Makrai itself. For distressed persons in outlying villages the Deputy Commissioner of Hoshangabad made an arrangement with the Chief by which deserving cases were given tickets entitling them to draw doles of food at the police outposts nearest their villages. It is probable also that a good many persons belonging to the Makrai State obtained employment on relief-works in the neighbouring Hoshangabad District.

Charitable relief in the Feudatories.

217. Mention has been made of the allotments which the several Feudatory States received from the Charitable Relief Fund. These aggregated Rs. 35,000, distributed as has been shown over the seven States which were most distressed. The

distribution of this sum under the several objects to which the Fund was devoted, and the number of persons assisted under each head, are shown below :—

	Description.	Number of persons aided.	Amount expended.
			Rs.
Objects I & II ...	Clothes and blankets to the poor, including orphans.	3,332	3,681
Object III ...	Relief to respectable persons—doles.	173	370
Object IV ...	Grants to cultivators for purchase of seed and bullocks.	10,140	23,102
	Total ...	13,645	27,153

The whole amount allotted was, it will be seen, not fully utilised.

CHAPTER VI.

RESOURCES AND RESISTING POWER OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE OUTLOOK AT THE CLOSE OF THE FAMINE.

Progress of the Province in the thirty years prior to 1892.

218. Reference has already been made, in Chapter I of this Report, to an examination effected in 1892 of the evidence bearing on the question of the progress of these Provinces during the thirty years which had then elapsed since their constitution. Such facts as were available pointed to the conclusion that there had been a very remarkable growth of material prosperity, due in most part to the facilities for trade offered by the two trunk lines of railway which now traverse the country north and south of the Satpura hills. Cultivation had expanded by 23 per cent., exports had trebled and imports had doubled in value, and the population had been increasing at the rate of over 1 per cent. per annum. It is *primâ facie* in strong contrast to this conclusion that five years later the State should have been compelled to spend a sum equivalent to two years' income in providing subsistence for the population, and to undertake relief measures on a scale unknown in the previous history of the country.

Apparent contrast with the disastrous effect of the recent famine.

219. The first and most obvious explanation lies of course in the fact that no such general and repeated crop failures had been experienced within historical times. The summary which follows indicates that agriculture has not been in the past immune from severe disaster. But serious failure has generally been a local exception to seasons of fair productiveness, and has caused a diminution in resources insignificant compared with that from which the people have been suffering during the years 1894 to 1897. Even so, however, it appears that the scarcities of past years were frequently of wider and further reaching effect than the famine through which the Provinces have now been passing, and that they resulted in a disorganization of society to which the recent famine has offered no parallel. A further explanation is that an increase in the aggregate wealth of a society does not, unfortunately, imply an increase in the wealth of all the individuals composing it, and that in India, as in other countries, the lowest class of the population can hardly be other than poverty-stricken, however great be the prosperity of the main body of producers and distributors. A certain amount of thrift and intelligence is required in order to annex a share in the growing wealth of the country; and—to quote from remarks offered by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab in 1888 regarding the circumstances of the poorest classes in that Province :—

> The fact that the lowest classes in India suffer so quickly from deficiency of food in bad seasons is not more surprising than the fact that the beasts of the field suffer also, if their customs be considered and the way in which they are content to live down to the lowest possible standard of living be taken into account.

It is, moreover, the case that the changes in conditions which accompany the development of material prosperity are in some respects to the disadvantage of the weaker and less assertive members of the community. The substitution of cash wages for wages in kind is an illustration in point, and it is probable that, save in the vicinity of towns where industrial development has created a demand for labour and sharpened the labourer's wits, the position of the *coolie* class has not materially improved since the Provinces have been opened up by railway communication.

Mistaken idea that absence of communications prevented famine in former times.

220. It is sometimes indeed asserted that the opening up of the country and the export of its produce has been of positive disadvantage to the staying powers of the people, and that the accumulation of large stores of grain was on the whole more to the general benefit than the exchange of the surplus produce into money. This opinion is not borne out by such accounts of past scarcities as are available, which indicate that in the days when each district was almost wholly self-supporting, comparatively minor failures of crops led to fluctuations of prices very much more violent than those which have recently been experienced.

221. The earliest scarcities of which accounts are available resulted more from political disturbances than climatic causes. War and its effects account for distress which prevailed in the upper Nerbudda valley during the years 1771, 1783 and 1809. It is recorded that in 1771 wheat sold in Narsinghpur at 5 seers the rupee. In 1803-4 there occurred a famine in Nimar and the adjacent tracts of Hoshangabad. These tracts had already suffered from the inroads of Scindia's armies, and a failure of rain in 1803 was a culminating disaster. The calamity is known in Nimar as the '*Mahá Kál*', when grain sold for half a seer the rupee. The fertile and populous *parganas* of Zainabad and Manjrod were desolated, and the latter remains to this day a fever-stricken wilderness, which has hitherto resisted endeavours at re-colonization. In the adjoining district of Hoshangabad during the same year the price of wheat rose to 3½ seers, and that of rice to 2½ seers to the rupee.

Sketch of failures prior to the formation of the Central Provinces.

1803.

In 1818-19 the Nagpur country and the districts north of the Nerbudda suffered from a famine caused by the failure of the autumn rains and excessive rain during the following cold weather. There was much suffering and loss of life. Acute famine prevailed for seven months in the districts of Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore, and in the latter district wheat sold at 4 seers per rupee. In Nagpur many of the poorer cultivators are reported to have sold their children into slavery.

1818-19.

From 1823 to 1827, the districts of Seoni and Mandla suffered from a succession of short crops due to floods, hail and blight, resulting in the desertion of many villages. In 1825-26, according to oral tradition, famine, attended with loss of life, occurred in Nagpur, and it is said that many people died after eating the cooked food which was doled out to them at the Raja's palace. The cause was deficiency of rain, and grain sold at 6 seers the rupee. In 1828-29 there was a failure in Raipur of the spring crops, and of both crops in Bilaspur. The price of wheat, rice and gram rose at Bilaspur to 12 seers per rupee, and the effect of this rise on the condition of the poorer classes may be judged of from the fact that at that time prices in favourable years were in Raipur 400 seers to the rupee, while in Bilaspur 120 seers of rice and 180 seers of *kodon* had been procurable for a rupee.

1823—27.

1828-29.

In 1832-33 excessive, followed by deficient, rain was the cause of severe distress in the Nerbudda valley, the Nagpur country and Berar. Heavy mortality occurred in Betul, and 5,000 people are said to have died in the city of Nagpur. Prices rose to 8 seers the rupee, and in Wardha children were sold for five seers of grain.

1832-33.

In 1833-34, owing to a failure of the autumn rain, the spring crop area of the Jubbulpore District was left practically unsown, and prices reached 8 seers per rupee. The cultivators of Jubbulpore flocked into the city leaving their fields untilled, and grain was imported by Government agency from Chhattisgarh into the Seoni and Mandla districts. This was the first occasion, previous to 1868, on which the district of Jubbulpore is reported to have suffered from failure of rainfall. In the following year there was a partial failure in Chhattisgarh when, in spite of the prohibition of export, rice reached 8 to 10 seers the rupee in Sambalpur and 12 seers in Bilaspur. In Raipur the price did not rise above 24 seers per rupee; but thousands of people are reported to have perished.

1833-34.

1834-35.

The following ten years were marked by no striking calamity; but in Nimar the rains of 1845 failed, very little rain falling up to the middle of August, and then ceasing altogether. Much distress ensued; Rs. 70,000 were expended on minor relief works, and 3 lakhs of revenue remitted. In the same year Chhattisgarh was the scene of another local famine; the cause is not stated. Prices in Bilaspur reached 10 seers for rice and 17 for wheat. In Raipur prices were again much lower than in the adjacent district, wheat selling at 21 and rice at 27 seers. Nevertheless there was great local distress.

1845.

In 1854-55 there was a severe visitation of rust, which destroyed the wheat crop of the northern districts, and is still well remembered by the people as a parallel to the similar disaster of 1894-95. Parents sold their children in Damoh, and many deaths from starvation were recorded in Saugor.

1854-55.

222. Such is the record of the various scarcities and famines from which the different parts of the country suffered before the formation of the Provinces in 1862. The causes of these disasters are seldom clearly stated, and precise details of their intensity are wanting; but the frequency with which one local season of distress followed another, the violent fluctuations in prices, and the manner in which failures, often apparently partial, seemed at once to produce severe distress, are a cogent answer to the statement of those who, in their praise of times gone by, maintain that before the railways carried away the produce, the people had always sufficient stocks to tide them over a period of scarcity.

Summary of the above and comparison with recent failures.

It may be affirmed with some confidence that hardly one of these isolated and partial failures would cause a famine at the present day, or even any serious rise in prices; but in those days they commonly trebled or quadrupled prices, and in the then landlocked Chhattisgarh would force up the price of rice to tenfold the normal. In strong contrast were the effects of the almost complete destruction in 1894 of the Saugor and Damoh wheat crop. That great disaster was supported by the people with but little apparent hardship. The price of gram rose no higher than 15 seers to the rupee. The relief works which were opened attracted even the poorer classes in no considerable numbers, and such distress as existed made no mark on the mortality or on the cropping of the land in the following year. Had fairly good seasons followed, these districts would have emerged almost without sign from the effects of a calamity which in former days would have constituted a landmark of disaster.

223. During the 40 years which followed 1855, severe scarcity was only once experienced, in the year 1868-69, memorable as that of the Bundelkhand famine. In 1868 as in 1896 the rains ended abruptly a month before time, but in 1868 a heavy fall in September saved the situation over the greater part of the country, and acute distress was confined to the northern portions of the Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore districts, the rice lands of Bhandara and Balaghat, and the plain of Chhattisgarh. Damoh and north Jubbulpore were suffering at the time from the effects of two successive years of unfavourable rainfall, and in them there appears to have been some distress during the year preceding (1867-68). Elsewhere the failure was practically that of one crop only, following a year in which the crops had been short, but not so short as to be in itself a very great misfortune. Distress was localized to a comparatively small area, and it was only in the strip of country adjoining the Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand States that the conditions were those of a famine. There was the same influx of starving wanderers from these States which in the recent famine added so greatly to the difficulties of administration in the Jubbulpore and Damoh districts.

The famine of 1868-69.

The total expenditure incurred upon famine relief in 1868-69 amounted (so far as can be ascertained) to Rs. 16,87,000, of which Rs. 2,30,000 represent *takávi* advances and Rs. 2,42,000 the outlay of private charity. The expenditure was barely a thirteenth of that incurred from public and private funds in the recent famine.

224. Much light is shed on the effects of this famine by facts disclosed in the remarks of the District Officers who were engaged in its relief. In the most severely affected area of Jubbulpore, the Murwara Tahsil, a census taken in September 1869, at the close of the famine, disclosed that 40,000 out of the 120,000 of the population of that tract were missing. Many had died, but many came straggling back during the next three or four years from distant districts whither they had betaken themselves. Traces of famine mortality were

Effects of the famine of 1868-69.

In Murwara.

for a year or two evident on the hill-sides or banks of unfrequented streams, and late in the autumn of 1869 a putrid fever, very fatal, was spoken of as present in Bijeraghogarh, and was believed to be due to the tainting of the water-supply.

Saugor and Damoh.

In Saugor the distress was chiefly among the Bundelkhand immigrants, and the local failure had been serious only in the Banda Tahsil. Distress seems to have been greater than is accounted for by the description of the crop failure, and, judging by the history of the past four years, greater than a similar failure would have produced in recent times. Damoh was also much distressed, and 548 deaths from starvation were reported. In the Nerbudda valley and Satpura districts there was not much pressure, and the Nagpur country also escaped, though we read of crowds of starving immigrants from the east, of whom some passed into Berar, but most hung about the towns of Nagpur and Kamptee.

Bhandara and Balaghat.

In Bhandara, where prices rose to 9 and 10 seers, in September "when almost in sight of a plentiful harvest, great distress showed itself in the rice-growing tracts." About 380 deaths were attributed to starvation and over 10,000 people emigrated. In Balaghat the uplands were able to help the lowlands with large supplies of *kodon*, a strange contrast to the experiences of the present famine. It was found in this district that "many poor wretches who had sold almost their last rag to buy food, would sooner starve on the miserable alms they could procure near their own houses than go a few miles to obtain substantial relief." The experience of the famine in this district is thus summed up: "There is now proof that the failure of the crops of a single year will bring famine and deaths by starvation at the time of the year when communication by land is impossible, and that poor-houses may be opened and food distributed with a prodigal and wasteful hand, but unless the feeble, the sick and the suffering are carefully sought out and brought to relief centres, deaths will surely occur."

Chhattisgarh.

The report of the Commissioner of Chhattisgarh affords a significant comment on the theory that the accumulation of grain owing to the impossibility of exporting it will suffice to obviate a famine. He wrote:—

> Under ordinary circumstances it would appear that in a country but sparsely populated and producing annually an enormous quantity of grain in excess of that required for home consumption, either large profits must accrue to the producers by the sale of grain for export, or enormous stores of grain must accumulate. In the first case the landholders must have been in a position to purchase what grain was required to keep their cultivators going through the period of scarcity, for it is evident, from the vast exports that were made at the most critical time, that there was plenty of grain in the country. In the second case the stores of surplus grain would be available for advances to those whose crops had failed. Notwithstanding this, however, we find that a very large number of cultivators were subjected to the most frightful hardships, and many apparently must have starved but for the timely assistance of Government. The cause of this anomalous state of affairs is simply that the profits arising from the surplus grain are absorbed by the wealthiest landholders, who are but few in number.
>
> The cultivators are, as a rule, extremely poor, and are under advances from the headman, so that they live from hand to mouth, and all grain in excess of that actually required for food goes to the landlord's store. The malguzars hoard the grain until the markets are favourable for exports, and then they either send off the surplus stores themselves or sell to dealers for export.

The accounts seem to show that village labourers were as resourceless then as they have recently shown themselves, and that poverty reached considerably higher up the social scale than it does at present. Inferior proprietors gave up their rights to their superior proprietors and tenants to their landlord as a condition of receiving help. In Raipur 53 per cent. of the offenders punished for thefts were of the cultivating class. People left the distressed tracts in large numbers owing to the inability of the landlords to support them; villages with 40 or 50 ryots were left with two or three: numbers were wholly deserted and drifted back into jungle. The Bilaspur narrative tells a similar tale of the utter helplessness of the cultivating classes. Everything centered in the landlord, and if he had neither means nor credit the village was deserted. The cheapness and profusion of ordinary years had unfitted the people to struggle with scarcity. "In ordinary years," wrote the District Officer, "so plentiful is the grain that for

six months the great bulk of the population do nothing whatever, and consider it a very great hardship indeed if any assistance in making a road in their vicinity is required of them." The grain dealers bought from those who had grain stored in the district, but made no attempt to import from elsewhere. The deaths returned from starvation were 618, which the Deputy Commissioner considered an under-statement of the case. About one lakh of rupees was spent by Government on relief works in Raipur and Bilaspur.

In those days the prices of produce fluctuated so violently that no one would take a cash loan in times of scarcity. This was pointed out with much emphasis in Raipur. With a normal price of 40 seers to the rupee, the man who purchased Rs. 100 worth of grain at its scarcity price of 12 seers would obtain 1,200 seers only, and when he repaid his debt on the return of good seasons he would have to sell 4,000 seers. On the other hand, the grain dealer would hold out for cash payment, and could not be induced to forego his chance of profit by lending in grain on the usual terms. Sir R. Temple's remark that he "hoped to drive cheapness from its last stronghold in Chhattisgarh" excited criticism at the time, but has been justified by events. In the words of Mr. Nicholl's reply to the Famine Commission in 1878: "So long as it remained a landlocked home of cheapness, thrift, industry and enterprise were works or virtues of supererogation. All but a few exceptions were miserably poor amid plenty, dependent on those few exceptions for life itself, without resources or credit in a time of distress."

Relief in Chhattisgarh in 1868-69.

225. The numbers relieved in Chhattisgarh appear inconsiderable in comparison with the reported intensity of distress. At no time were as many as 10,000 people on the relief works. Then also extraordinary difficulty was experienced in inducing the people to take advantage of the relief works opened for them, and the then Chief Commissioner, Sir John Morris, writes that "throughout the course of relief administration in Chhattisgarh the main difficulty to be overcome has always been that the mere prospect of escape from starvation was an insufficient attraction to the labouring classes. It therefore became requisite to relax the principle of making Government relief only attractive when every other means of support had failed, and of bringing it before the people in a form which would render labour preferable to starvation. To this end it was merely necessary to bring employment to their doors. So long as work did not involve forethought or preparation, they were willing enough to accept it. No increase in the rate of wages was required; indeed, where it was found that labourers were putting by part of their pay, the scale of wages was reduced to 1 anna for a man and ¾ anna for a woman, consistently with the imperative necessity of making the most of the public funds, and keeping off all able to obtain other means of subsistence by bringing down wages to the minimum point at which life could be supported."

The numbers on relief attained their maximum in March 1869. They did not rise during the hot weather months, and the workers were finally dispersed by a frightful outbreak of cholera, which on one work caused 52 deaths in the space of three hours. The Deputy Commissioner, Captain Twyford, hastened to the spot, only himself to fall a victim. Panic reigned, "the wretched deserters spread themselves broadcast over the country carrying the disease wherever they went, and it raged with unexampled violence till the month of August."

Mortality of 1868-69.

226. The registration of vital statistics was so imperfect in those days that little idea can be gained of the mortality due to the famine of 1868-69. But the figures as returned from the areas to which registration extended compare as follows:—

	1867.	1868.	1869.	1870.
Cholera	...	7,952	51,387	107
Small-pox	...	2,843	16,849	2,348
Fevers	...	47,160	68,999	81,224
Bowel diseases	...	5,175	12,550	14,497
Other causes	...	13,928	23,488	13,407
Total ...	40,632	77,058	173,273	111,583

In the severely distressed districts, the number of deaths for such circles as sent returns was as follows :—

Year.	Saugor.	Damoh.	Jubbulpore.	Raipur.	Bilaspur.
1868	9,843	2,373	10,627	5,768	9 039
1869	27,270	9 492	26,561	21 331	20,926
1870	10,099	3.461	9.915	10,185	4,433

Taking these figures as they stand, they indicate that the annual mortality was more than trebled. Of 42,000 deaths which occurred in the registering circles of Raipur and Bilaspur in the famine year, 18,500 were attributed to cholera. Between the census of 1866 and that of 1872, the Jubbulpore District was returned as having lost in population to the extent of 70,000, and the population of Damoh fell by 14,000. The population of the Murwara Tahsil between 1866 and 1872 fell from 120,000 to 108,000. Over the surveyed tracts of the Province the increase in the population during these six years was only a little over 1 per cent., or one-sixth of the normal.

Enquiries made in Berar showed that of 59,000 immigrants from the rice districts of the Wainganga valley, only 9,500 had returned to their homes.

Decline in cultivation.

227. No accurate figures are obtainable as to the extent of land which generally fell out of cultivation. In the Murwara Tahsil of the Jubbulpore District, which then, as recently, was amongst the tracts most severely affected, the cultivated area is reported to have fallen from 248,937 acres to 171,681 acres, or by 31 per cent., and seven years passed before it recovered itself.

Condition of aborigines in 1868-69.

228. In one point the famine of 1868-69 contrasts very strikingly with that from which the Provinces are now recovering: the aboriginal classes seem to have escaped almost untouched, and there is no reference to the complete collapse of their resources during the monsoon months which formed one of the most disastrous features of the recent famine. In Raipur, for instance, we find it written: "The want of the harvest was scarcely felt by the forest tribes who, as a rule, consume very little rice or wheat; and besides, the parts where they reside received a very fair fall of rain, and they were able to grow their usual crop of Indian corn and vegetables."

The Baihar Tahsil of the Balaghat District not only sent grain to the north, but supplied the lowlands with *kodon*. The Deputy Commissioner wrote :—

> I never saw a Gond or Baiga in anything but his usually good condition. I have already described how the inhabitants of the wilds of Bhimlat and Raigarh supplied thousands of maunds of grain to the people of the plains, and it may be here added that they kept back ample for their own consumption and seed. The wild Gonds and Baigas are always accustomed to depend entirely on themselves, and so well are they acquainted with the resources of the forests in which they live, that even were their crops to fail entirely, there would be no fear of their dying from starvation. The crops of 1868-69 yielded only about one half of their usual produce.

So also from Mandla, Seoni and Betul, where distress was not severe, we hear of the great value of forest produce, though it is stated that unwholesome food reduced the strength of many persons. Of Betul it is said that *mahua* saved the hill people from actual want. And of Chhindwara we read: "Much of the population was able to fall back upon, or rather to subsist entirely on, berries and other jungle products; this saved them entirely from the worst forms of distress." The hilly districts, in which the aboriginal population is

largest, gathered fair crops and were indeed in a position to export grain. Jungle produce was a supplementary not the sole means of subsistence, and as such carried the people through a period of high prices without much distress. The experience of the past year has demonstrated the error of a conclusion hitherto accepted—that the forest can supply altogether the failure of the field.

Failure of 1886 in Chhattisgarh.

229. The famine of 1868-69 was followed by a period of 28 years of prosperity, broken only by the failure in 1886 of the rice crop of Chhattisgarh and in 1894 of the wheat crop of Saugor and Damoh. The rainfall of 1886 in Raipur and Bilaspur was insufficient for the unirrigated rice cultivation on light soils, and over a very large area in the central parts of the country the crop failed altogether. Taking the Raipur District as a whole, the outturn was only a quarter of the normal. Then, as in 1868, large areas of rice were abandoned to cattle. The amount of suffering which resulted was, however, very small. Relief works were opened, but attracted few people, and the District Officers' accounts do not notice any of the now familiar signs of distress. As in 1868, a timely fall of rain in the late autumn assured the spring crop, and troubles rapidly passed away and left no trace. The failure of the wheat crop of 1894 in the Saugor and Damoh districts has already been referred to. That was a most signal disaster, involving the loss of at least 75 per cent. of the food supply. Yet it resulted in no more than passing stringency in the condition of the labouring classes, and made no impression whatever on the cultivation of the land. Indeed cultivation actually expanded during the following year.

Failure of 1894 in Saugor and Damoh.

Conclusions from review of previous famines.

230. The information available concerning the crop failures and scarcities from which these Provinces have at various times suffered appears to lead legitimately to the conclusion that the general resisting power of the people has very markedly increased during the past generation, and that the destitution following on severe agricultural disaster is limited to certain classes of the community much more narrowly than before. A deduction drawn at the time from the experiences of 1868-69 was that the failure of a single crop would suffice to produce a famine. Yet such failures were supported in 1886 and 1894 without much apparent hardship or any lasting effect. A contrast of the circumstances of these three years discloses differences which bear with much force on the matter of the present discussion. A failure which 30 years ago completely disorganized the rural economy of a district, some years later—at a time when the country had been opened up by railways—produced no visible effect but the need for providing work for a few hundred coolies, and left the producing power of the agricultural classes unimpaired. The most marked and serious feature of earlier scarcities was the abandonment by proprietors and tenants of their rights in land. The relinquishment of villages and holdings in Chhattisgarh which followed the drought of 1868-69 has already been noticed. Enquiries made during recent re-settlements have shown that in the Damoh and Jubbulpore districts over a fifth of the land held on the highly privileged absolute occupancy tenure had been relinquished by its holders during the years which followed the drought, and in tracts which then suffered comparatively lightly, the distress affected the cultivating classes very severely. From one part of the Nagpur District—that bordering on Bhandara—at least a quarter of the old-established tenants absconded. The recent famine—infinitely more severe though it was than any which preceded it—caused but little disturbance of farming occupancies. Taking the Province as a whole, the area occupied for cultivation has declined by less than 2 per cent. There are, it is true, certain tracts which have been crippled for some years to come, the most prominent of them being the strip adjoining Bundelkhand and Rewa along the northern frontier of the Saugor, Damoh and Jubbulpore districts. Yet the village statistics show that in Damoh and Jubbulpore the area held in absolute occupancy right which has been relinquished amounts respectively to no more than 5 and 3·6 per cent. of the total. The cultivating classes have generally withstood the famine with surprising firmness, and the general result of enquiries made during the past half-year is to show that in the

Greater resisting power now exhibited.

more fertile parts of the Provinces their resisting power was independent of the famine relief offered to them, and that there is no great difference between the condition of villages which did and those which did not send their ryots to the relief works. No doubt the liberal grants made from the Charitable Relief Fund account in part for the rapid recovery of cultivation. But the money so distributed represents after all no very considerable proportion of the outlay entailed by the sowing of the land, and the present condition of the Province is a very strong proof of the unexpected strength which the ryots have been able to display in time of unprecedented disaster.

Other indications of less severe pressure in recent famine.

231. There are other facts which indicate that destitution during the recent famine was in some respects less general than that produced by lighter calamities in former years. The statistics of Railway traffic, the Post Office and the Telegraph do not disclose any such general disorganization of conditions as might be inferred from the dependence upon Government of the poorest classes of the community. The Money Order business actually increased, and the operations of the Savings Bank suffered very little diminution. The Excise revenue fell very greatly, but this is of course largely drawn from the labouring and aboriginal classes. The Municipal accounts for the year 1897-98 are not yet complete; but during the preceding year the income from octroi generally fell off by only 6 per cent., and it is known that in some towns—Jubbulpore amongst the number—the receipts rose considerably in 1897-98. This is no doubt partly due to the reversal of the ordinary course of the grain trade—towns distributing to the country instead of receiving from it. But an examination of the figures indicates that the consumption of luxuries, such as sugar and tobacco, suffered no large check, and that the general purchasing power of the townspeople remained but little diminished.

Statistics of cultivation after the famine.

232. It was not to be expected that the effects of four years' calamities should be shaken off immediately. But the crop statistics for the current revenue year (October 1897 to September 1898) are generally of a very encouraging character.

The following table compares the area actually cropped during the current year with that of the two years preceding:—

District.		1895-96.	1896-97.	1897-98.	Increase or Decrease of the area of 1897-98 on that of 1895-96.	
					Actual.	Percentage.
1		2	3	4	5	6
		Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	
Jubbulpore Division.	Saugor ...	886,843	747,267	754,439	—132,404	—15
	Damoh ...	485,645	428,024	433,283	—52,362	—11
	Jubbulpore ...	890,461	846,590	889,307	—1,154	—0·1
	Mandla ...	598,955	464,628	445,719	—153,236	—25
	Seoni ...	649,254	571,071	574,340	—74,914	—11
	Total ...	3,511,158	3,057,580	3,097,088	—414,070	—12

(*Concld.*)—

District.			1895-96.	1896-97.	1897-98.	Increase or Decrease of the area of 1897-98 on that of 1895-96.	
						Actual.	Percentage.
1			2	3	4	5	6
			Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	
Nerbudda Division.	Narsinghpur	...	584,084	512,772	545,278	−38 806	− 7
	Hoshangabad	...	1,012,946	827,471	857,227	−155,719	−15
	Nimar	...	502,461	550,945	562,069	+59,608	+12
	Betul	...	641,144	577.971	543 934	−97.210	−15
	Chhindwara	...	693,054	657 367	689,070	−3 984	−0·5
	Total	...	3 433 689	3 126,526	3.197.578	−236,111	7
Nagpur Division.	Wardha	...	869,118	853 245	916,854	+47.736	+5
	Nagpur	...	1,194,588	1,189,644	1,247,042	+52,454	+5
	Chanda *	...	586,166	561,110	605,514	+19,348	+3
	Bhandara. Khalsa	...	564 960	563 022	561,275	−44 452	5
	Bhandara. Zamindaris	...	276,110	235,054	235.343		
	Balaghat. Khalsa	...	310,715	270,489	244 066	−96.334	22
	Balaghat. Zamindaris	...	118,037	100,324	88,352		
	Total	...	3,919,694	3.773.888	3.898.446	−21,248	−0·6
Chhattisgarh Division.	Raipur *	...	2 080 800	1 998 491	1,980 420	−100,380	−5
	Bilaspur *	...	1,202,735	1,145.876	1,126.607	−76,128	−6
	Sambalpur *	...	587,481	585,107	618,308	+30,827	+5
	Total	...	3 871,016	3.730,474	3.725.335	−145 681	−4
	Grand Total	...	14.735 557	13 628 468	13 918 447	−817 110	5 5

* *Khalsa* only.

There was generally an increase on the cultivation of the year preceding. Taking the Provinces as a whole there has been a decline of 5·5 per cent. during the past three years, and if the comparison is carried back for a further three years the decline amounts to about 10 per cent., which does not appear a very serious result of the past succession of bad seasons. In two districts—Mandla and Balaghat—the cropped area has fallen by more than a fifth: in no other district does the decrease exceed 15 per cent. The northern districts have generally suffered most, though a decrease of 12 per cent. in the Jubbulpore Division appears a light penalty to pay for so severe a famine, following on protracted adverse conditions. Agriculture has maintained itself strikingly well in the Chhattisgarh districts. In Wardha, Nagpur and Chanda cultivation has actually extended. The increase shown in Nimar is in great measure nominal, resulting from the transfer of a *pargana* to that district from Hoshangabad.

Increase in *kharif* area.

The cropping of the monsoon season showed on the Province as a whole a slight increase on the area of 1895-96. In the Saugor and Hoshangabad districts the increase was very large indeed, and generally *kharif* sowings were made on a much more extended scale

than usual in the Nerbudda valley and the Nagpur country. The Mandla and Balaghat districts alone show a large decrease, amounting respectively to 31 and 16 per cent. on the area of 1895-96.

Decline in spring crop area.

The spring crop area on the other hand declined considerably—by 15 per cent.—the contraction being particularly noticeable in Saugor and Hoshangabad, where the deficient autumn rainfall caused a considerable amount of land to become unfit for sowing. The substitution of *juari* for wheat has been a striking feature in the economic history of these two districts during the past four years. Taking all districts together the cultivation of wheat fell off by a fifth, and this crop now covers only $2\frac{3}{4}$ million acres of the 4 millions formerly devoted to it. During the past three years the wheat-growing area has decreased by 517,041 acres, and the rice-growing area by 515,833 acres, while the area under *juari* has risen by 651,642 acres.

Outturn of autumn harvest.

233. Against the contraction in cropped area must be set the excellent character of the autumn harvest, which over most of the country was one of the best within memory. The exports of cotton and *til* have been on an unprecedented scale.

The following figures give an estimate of the amount of food which the autumn crops yielded as compared with a year's requirements:—

District.	Requirements for one year's food supply.	Estimated outturn of autumn food-crops.
	Tons.	Tons.
Saugor	98 620	80,750
Damoh	54,260	45,120
Jubbulpore	124,700	98,560
Mandla	56,560	60,078
Seoni	61,800	53,320
Narsinghpur	61,180	38 330
Hoshangabad	87,540	54 070
Nimar	41,740	126,680
Betul	53,860	50,570
Chhindwara	56,580	88,920
Wardha	65,800	137,100
Nagpur	126,320	175,440
Chanda	93,520	146,760
Bhandara	123,800	267,400
Balaghat	63,900	106,020
Raipur	205,760	414,390
Bilaspur	173,040	299,720
Sambalpur	78,180	233,700
Total ...	1,632,160	2,476,928

Over the Province as a whole the supply is more than sufficient for a year, allowance being made for more liberal diet, as well as for food for cattle and seed-grain; but in the districts of the Jubbulpore Division, except Mandla, and in Narsinghpur, Hoshangabad and Betul, the amount available required to be supplemented by the spring crop yields to cover the requirements of the year.

Outturn of spring harvest.

234. The spring harvest was not as productive as the autumn harvest, but was up to or over the normal in ten of the eighteen districts. In only one district, Hoshangabad, is the outturn reported as less than 75 per cent. of the normal. It is probable that

stocks are lower in Hoshangabad than elsewhere. But no further cause for anxiety remains in regard to the sufficiency of the food supply.

Local deterioration.

235. While, however, in the Provinces as a whole there has been surprisingly little deterioration of a lasting character, there are certain localities in which cultivation has been materially thrown back, and will take some time to recover. The northernmost portions of the Saugor and Damoh districts have always been amongst the poorest and most backward parts of the Provinces, and could meet the famine with very little resources of their own. The noxious grass known as *kâns* (*Saccharum spontaneum*) infests the country, and land left untilled is rapidly overrun by it and becomes very difficult to reclaim. Elsewhere land which has from lack of seed fallen into fallow will, it is believed, be rapidly brought back into cultivation, with, in some cases, its bearing power improved by the enforced rest. But the ground lost during the past four years will not all be recovered in a season or two. It is a popular saying among cultivators that three good years are necessary to make up for a bad one. The saying may be tinged by the over-despondent tone which the farmer in all parts of the world uses when speaking of the prospects of his agriculture. But it is not unlikely that three years may pass before the Provinces throw off the last signs of the greatest famine of this century.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

236. This narrative of the Famine in the Central Provinces in 1896-97 records the experience of the past, and does not deal, except incidentally, with the lessons and deductions for the future, to which that experience points. The changes required in the Provincial Famine Code, and in the methods of preparing for and combating famine, are the subject of a separate report which is being submitted to the Government of India, the final conclusions on which will not be formulated until the Famine Commission now sitting shall have completed their enquiries. It will however have become abundantly evident from the course of the narrative, that the difficulties of famine relief in these Provinces were of a very special and formidable kind, and that it would not be just to the officers who have, during the fifteen months which the Famine covered, used their utmost endeavour to succour the distressed, and in doing so have endured much hardship and discomfort which have been encountered with the most praiseworthy devotion and self-denial, if the success of their efforts were measured by the same standard as is applied to other parts of the Empire where the difficulties were less.

237. The Chief Commissioner cannot conclude this narrative without expressing his admiration of the spirit in which his officers of all grades met the calamity, and applied themselves to mitigate its effects. In a separate Minute he has dealt with the services of individual officers, and this is not the place to dwell at length on the details of each man's exertions. But the narrative would not be complete if it did not indicate how greatly the resources of the Administration were taxed to cope with the emergency. In a large Province, with a numerous body of officers, it is possible, when famine invades only a portion of the area, to adjust the staff with some nicety to the work to be done. In a small Administration, on the other hand, with relief required to a greater or less extent in every district, such adjustments are difficult or impracticable. Local knowledge is a most important requisite for successful administration in dealing with famine as in other matters; and casualties in the staff of the Commission made it impossible in a large number of cases to secure it. Of the four Commissioners who have the oversight of the Civil Divisions of the Province, two were invalided and one retired early in 1897. In the Jubbulpore Division, the place of the Commissioner invalided (Mr. Anderson) was taken by Mr. Priest, who in two months' time fell a victim to cholera. An officer (Mr. Galbraith) was obtained from the North-Western Provinces to officiate for a month in his place, at the end of which time another officer (Mr. Fuller) was transferred to the Commissionership, from the same Provinces; thus in this one Division four persons held the office of Commissioner during the year 1897. In the Jubbulpore District early in 1896 the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Duff, was invalided home; his successor, Mr. Arthur, died of cholera within a month, and his place had to be taken by Mr. Robertson from Nimar. After 4½ months Mr. Robertson went on furlough and Mr. Duff returned. In January 1897 Mr. Duff died, and his place was taken by Mr. Fox-Strangways. Two months later, owing to another casualty, Mr. Robertson had to be recalled from leave to take Mr. Fox-Strangways' place, the latter being required to act as Chief Secretary. All these changes were absolutely unavoidable, and the best arrangements possible were made to secure continuity, as well as efficiency, of administration. In several other districts similar changes, due to death, invaliding, or other like cause, occurred; and the ideal condition of things, that a district should be administered in time of Famine by an officer who had learnt to know it thoroughly under its ordinary aspects, was very seldom realised. In these circumstances it is not surprising that there were some failures and mistakes; and it is, the Chief Commissioner thinks, extremely creditable to the officers of the Commission and all the other Departments engaged in famine relief that failures and mistakes were so few.

238. Nor would it be fitting that this Report should conclude without a word of reference to the generous and ungrudging assistance and support which the Chief Commissioner received throughout the Famine from the Government of India. The difficulty of forecasting the amount of money required to provide for the necessities of relief was, in the absence of all previous experience of famines in the Province, extremely great; and it became necessary on more than one occasion to ask the Supreme Government to sanction expenditure much in excess of what had originally been thought probable. Throughout the famine period these requests met with the most generous response, and from first to last there was no check in the operations of relief owing to the want of the necessary funds. The needs of the Province for assistance in men were also, as far as possible, complied with; two officers were obtained from Burma, and two from the Punjab, to re-inforce the slender District Staff; and reference has already been made to the valuable aid given in relief operations by the officers of the Indian Staff Corps, of whom twenty-two were at one time or another deputed to the Province.

May 1898.

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APPENDIX I.

Note on Famine Relief in Mandla by MR. H. SHARP, *Famine Relief Officer, dated the 29th November* 1897.

The following remarks upon famine administration in the Mandla District, are based upon the impressions formed during eight months' work, as Famine-Relief Officer, in that place. Such impressional remarks, if necessary anywhere, are doubly necessary in the case of Mandla; for in the case of this district, bald figures can give only half the truth; they require to be enlightened by some general idea of the country and the people.

I had previously been employed on famine-relief in the Jubbulpore District; arriving in Mandla in April, I was at once struck, on proceeding into camp, with the extraordinary difficulties which here surrounded the relief operations. My circle consisted of three large Revenue Inspectors' circles, comprising the larger portion of the Mandla Tahsil. Of these the most westerly, that of Bamhni, may be called the garden of Mandla, consisting, as it does, of a rich *haveli* land, fruitful (in ordinary years) with rice and wheat crops. This circle presented no special difficulties, being in most respects similar to that portion of Jubbulpore in which I had previously worked; the villages are large, the country is generally open, and the Hindu element prevails in the population. The middle circle was that of Ramnagar, which village, with its remnants of old palaces, marks the site of a Gondish capital, older than Mandla itself. This entire circle (of which a small northerly strip was at first excluded from my circle) is a tangle of steep mountains, centreing round the imposing range of Jagmandal, deep-flowing rivers, the Nerbudda and the Buriner, and vast, almost impenetrable, jungles. The third and most easterly of my circles was that of Bichhia—a land of undulating, prairie-like plains, arid and baking in the hot months, in the rains and cold weather covered with thick grass, which often grows to a height of eight or ten feet, and greatly impedes progress. The monotony of these plains is relieved by lines of flat-topped, forest-clad hills, behind and below which lie the beautiful but malarious *sál* jungles, forming a strong contrast with the teak and bamboo forests of Ramnagar. In these jungles the dew lies heavy even in May; the vegetation is rank and luxuriant, and the soil, swampy and full of quicksands even in the hot weather, becomes in the rains an evil-smelling morass. These two circles, while possessing great artistic beauties, are, from every other point of view, barbarous and forbidding; the population is thin; schools and other signs of civilization are often totally lacking; the soil is but scantily tilled; here and there the jungles are encroaching, and much of the land threatens to 'reel back into the beast.' The following figures will show most strikingly the wild and 'jungly' character of the country: in seven villages, all situated within a small area on the borders of the Ramnagar and Bichhia circles, out of a total of 47 deaths which occurred during the months of July, August, September and October, no less than 10 were caused by dangerous beasts; 1 being due to a tiger, 6 to panthers and 3 to venomous snakes. In one village alone (Guleri) out of a total of 5 deaths during those months, 1 was due to a panther and 2 to snakes. Out of the 10 persons who so perished, 4 were in receipt of relief—namely, 2 of village-relief, 1 of kitchen-relief, and 1 of Charitable Fund-relief. I may add that, while returning at night from the inspection of several of this group of villages, I encountered a large bear floundering about the public pathway. Nor are the inhabitants less remarkable than the physical features of the country; the plains and forests are inhabited almost entirely by the aboriginal Gonds and Baigas; here (to quote the words of the historian of British India) "they remain, a strange study to the historian and anthropologist: worshippers of spirits, ghosts and demons; worshippers of snakes, trees, mountains, streams, and aught that inspires wonder, fear or terror, but little affected by the efforts of their British rulers to inculcate the most primary elements of civilisation, except in so far as their grosser habits of human sacrifice, infanticide and intertribal war and bloodshed have been sternly suppressed."

It was into these two circles that I was directed to proceed during the month of April and the first half of May. A strict examination of the villages was considered necessary; and I marched daily, seldom halting except for an inspection of the larger relief centres. Starting in the early morning, I used to visit all villages on the way to the next camping place. The tents were generally reached about mid-day; and after breakfast and the office work had been disposed off, I occupied the afternoons and evenings in making a tour of those villages situated round the spot where I was encamped. This programme was occasionally varied by inspections of the Public Works charges or of the local works and relief centres. Camping in Mandla during the hot weather, especially when it is necessary to be constantly on the move, is not unattended by its discomforts. Though the district is chiefly forest, there is a great lack in the highland tracts of trees of sufficient size to afford shade for the tents. These had sometimes to be pitched in the open, when the most comfortable course was to abandon them, and spend the middle of the day under a small tree or shrub. It was likewise difficult to provide food for the servants; the ordinary diet of the Gonds and Baigas is not such as to commend itself to the Hindu and Musalman; there are practically no *baniyas*, and I found it necessary to charter an extra camel, laden with rice and other grains for the camp. A more difficult want to remedy was that of water; in any hot season, but especially in a year of drought, the water-supply, except in those villages which are directly situated on rivers, is extremely precarious. The wells are few, and this year they almost all dried up, as did also the *jhirias* or surface-wells from which the inhabitants usually

supply themselves. Frequently the only water within a long distance was scooped from pools in the rocks, at which not only all the surrounding inhabitants but also the beasts of the forests quenched their thirst. This dirty fluid, even after precipitation, was little better than liquid mud, and owing to the generality of cholera, was a source of constant danger to the servants, who have an obstinate dislike of disinfectants. But the difficulties touching camp arrangements were as nothing to those which beset the distribution of relief. The mainstay of the famine policy during the hot weather was works; in my circle there were 3 Public Works charges with hospitals and kitchens for the infirm and the children, and 7 tank works with relief centres attached for those unfit for work. It was one of the main duties of the Famine Relief Officer to induce the people to come to these centres, where the wage was sufficient to allow them to live in comparative comfort. As regards the attitude of the people towards these works, I cannot do better than quote from an article which appeared in the *Pioneer* of September 26th, and which contrasts the famine administration of the North-Western Provinces and the Central Provinces. "In many districts (*i. e.*, of the Central Provinces) the greater part of the population belong to indigenous tribes of the hill and forest, who cling to their houses with a sentiment which may be picturesque, but at the present time has been fatal to them. In spite of forty years of British rule villages are not uncommonly met with where the sight of a *sahib* frightens the whole population off into the jungles. * * * * . It is easy to realize how extremely difficult famine administration must be in dealing with people of this class. Works were opened for them liberally, but such 'rushes' as drove to distraction officers in these (*i. e.*, the North-Western) Provinces seem to have been rarely if ever experienced. Comparatively few of the Gonds and Baigas were attracted to the works at all, and those who came were ready to abscond and take their chance in the jungles on the application of the mildest of the work-tests prescribed by the Famine Code. Under these conditions the exigencies of famine-relief only began when the relief-works were open. It was not enough to offer the people food: it was literally necessary to go forth into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." These remarks apply with threefold force to a district such as Mandla; for, as Jubbulpore is to the North-Western Provinces, so is Mandla to Jubbulpore. While on duty in Jubbulpore, I was 'driven to distraction' by 'rushes' on to the works; while in Mandla I was distracted by rushes off the works. I need only quote one instance out of many: in my diary for the week ending Wednesday, June 9th, speaking of the village of Kanhargawan, I wrote: "I here collected together a large number of helpless wanderers, and put 25, who were in a very bad state, on gratuitous relief at the centre, and 23, who were capable of it, upon the light work. I ordered the Kotwars to look after them; nevertheless, all but 24 escaped during the night, though many of them were in a fearfully emaciated condition. These wanderers are a curious phenomenon; many of them refuse gratuitous relief, even when given in the form of money; they prefer to beg from place to place, though how they travel is a marvel." I should remark, that Kanhargawan, about which I wrote this, is situated in the more civilised and fertile part of the district. And, if homeless wanderers were thus impelled by the mere lust of wandering, as by the gad-fly of Io, to shun proffered aid, much more did the instincts, surroundings, and their own apparent interests for the time being, repel the wilder Gonds and Baigas from the relief which was provided. For these people are shy, retiring and unenterprising; lazy in all employment save those, such as wood-craft, which are congenial; and suspicious towards all attempted interference with their customary existence. They are imbued with that *heimweh* which is characteristic of all upland-dwelling folk. And, even when weaned from their homes to the works, they found the fetters of organization trying to their wild and undisciplined natures; divided into gangs and tied down to certain hours of attendance, they were like frail exotics in a Northern climate—at the least breath of censure from an overseer, or the least fall in the scale of wages, their power of endurance would shrivel up, and they would return to their native haunts and habits.

Relief by means of works being thus to a great extent ineffective, there remained the alternative of village relief—a system under which a fixed monthly allowance is provided to all who through age, emaciation or physical infirmities are rendered incapable of earning their own living, and regularly paid over to them in their own homes. That this form of relief, again, did not spread more widely during the hot season, is largely due to the nature and habits of this peculiar people. The staple food of the Gonds is the millet crop (*kodon* and *kutki*) which grows so profusely in the most unlikely-looking localities. It is off *pej* or porridge, made of these millets, that he makes his mid-day meal. A small rice plot supplies him with a change of diet when he returns home in the evening, and provides a delicacy for wedding-feasts and such like celebrations. But, in addition to this, each year, during the hot weather, an emigration into the jungle takes place, similar to that of the hop-pickers into Kent. This is for the purpose of collecting the jungle-produce which is then so abundant. The leaves of the *palas* tree, the fruit *tendu*, and above all the *mahua* blossom, are then gathered, eaten, and, ordinarily, stored. This last product is of so valuable a nature, that the prospects of the *mahua* crop are regularly recorded in the Gazette under the section devoted to Revenue and Agriculture. It provides the people, when dried, with a wholesome diet; and from it they produce the fiery spirits to which many of them are so partial. This year the crop was a heavy one; the people expended their energies in gathering it; much was eaten and but little stored. In the villages, the stock of millets and rice was practically exhausted; and the Gond was like a school-boy, who, deserting his mid-day beef and pudding, lives wholly on the productions

of the confectioner—wholesome enough as an addition to plainer diet, but apt to disagree when they become the '*pièce de résistance.*' It sounds paradoxical, but it is not too much to say, that the very abundance of jungle-produce proved the ruin of the people in this year of famine. Sure of a congenial and easily-obtained diet in the jungles, they shunned the works which had been opened for them and omitted to throw themselves in the way of other forms of relief. Careless of the future, they neglected to provide against the day when the rains would at once drive them to their villages and turn the jungle-produce on which they trusted into poison. The light and unsubstantial diet weakened their constitutions against the malarious season; while it kept them sufficiently plump and robust-looking to deceive the Inspecting Officers, with whom the test of qualification for gratuitous relief was emaciation or any other physical incapacity for light work. But, above all, the absence of the villagers in the jungles prevented the Famine Officers from coming into contact with many cases which would have claimed attention: and in many villages the Relief Registers remained a blank. The article from the *Pioneer*, which has been already quoted, touches on this point: "They (the Gonds and Baigas) wander off into the forests at daybreak, and a Relief Officer had to arrive at their homes before sunrise to ensure that they were brought on to his list." But I will go further than this; if possible, I always sent a chaprassi ahead over night to the villages which I proposed to inspect next morning, with a view to warning the people of my approach, and keeping them in their homes. But the plan was useless: for generally, on arriving, I found the places deserted, and only a few old women, too feeble to face the hardships of the jungles, gathering *gurlu*, a large grass-seed, in the fields, and devouring it as they gathered. The rest of the people were in the forests, where they lived night and day; and it was there that I found them, if I began a long march an hour or two before dawn, lying in groups by the little fires round which they bivouacked and slept. So striking was this emigration, that before the end of April I was led, while speaking of the neighbourhood of Ghugri (particularly rich in jungle-produce) to emphasize in my diary the danger of passing over unrelieved destitute persons who were away *mahua* gathering, and I noted the advisablity of keeping a watch on the people when they returned to their homes at the close of the *mahua* season.

Thus relief, alike on the works and in homes of the people, was prevented from spreading to its proper limits, and meanwhile the season was advancing. It became incumbent upon Relief Officers to distribute that portion of the Indian Famine Charitable Fund which had been allotted to aiding the cultivator with seed and plough-bullocks for the summer sowings. The arrangements made by the Deputy Commissioner were elaborate and admirable; a distributing officer was assigned to each Revenue Inspector's Circle, in order that the money might be given out simultaneously in all parts of the district. The distributions were expected to be mainly completed within a period of a fortnight or three weeks; and thus all cultivators so aided would be enable to get their seed into the ground in good time, while the temptation of spending the money beforehand on more urgently pressing needs would be largely removed. The circle assigned to me was Bamhni; and on May 25th, I started from Mandla with a first instalment of Rs. 10,000 strapped on an elephant. This, if one of the most satisfactory, was also one of the most arduous and trying phases of the relief operations. The season was the hottest in the year when life under canvas is almost intolerable. The work was wholly sedentary and the anxiety entailed considerable. Thousands of people, attracted by the hope of gain or by mere curiosity, crowded round my camp at each halting-place; sometimes I was obliged to draw a cordon of police and kotwars round my tents to secure myself against constant and clamorous interruption; always the water-supply for this unusual concourse had to be considered, and precaution taken against the outbreak of an epidemic. The method of procedure which I adopted was as follows: four centres were chosen, and the surrounding cultivators summoned to each on a fixed date. Every morning they were marshalled before me by patwari circles and by villages, each village attended by its mukaddam and kotwar. One by one they were called up—each village of each circle was lined up before me in turn, and each individual called out and questioned; his answers had to be confirmed from the records in the patwaries' books; the rough lists of the patwaries had to be checked; some names were struck out; the sums placed against others had to be altered; and many names, again, had to be added, especially of those ryots who had been attracted off the relief-works by the rumour of aid and the revival of the hope (long abandoned) of tilling and sowing their fields. The scene presented was animated and picturesque to a degree—the dense crowd of brightly-dressed natives, the malguzars hovering round the office table, to watch over the interests of their tenants, the fakirs and other mendicants with painted faces and discordant instruments of music, the soberly attired police guarding the treasure, and the mediæval looking kotwars with red puggrees and bearing long spears or iron-bound clubs, all under the chequered light and shade of some large mango-grove where, for the sake of coolness, I transacted business in the open air. When the checking was over, the crowd dispersed for the mid-day meal: while the writing up of the registers and vouchers occupied the Revenue Officers and myself till the afternoon. Then the crowd collected again; circle by circle, village by village, the tenants were again called up, the results of the investigation made known and the money disbursed. This lasted till sunset; and then, unless the distribution at that centre demanded a longer halt, I hurried on by night to the next halting place—so important was it to get out the money in time and avoid the risk of disappointing the assembled tenants by unpunctuality, which might have resulted in

their dispersal. The operations were then commenced anew next morning. Between the 25th of May and the 8th of June, I went the round of the circle and distributed the bulk of my grant; all the marches, with the exception of the last 10 miles, had to be accomplished at night, while from 10 to 12 hours' work had to be got through every day. Even then, much still remained to be done; the large relief-works had to be visited, and lists drawn up of those tenants who, in despair of sowing their land, were still maintaining themselves there; they were paid a substantial sum and dismissed to their homes; many, too, were found in the villages, who through illness, absence, or some other cause, had failed to participate in the original distribution. Even up to the end of July, I was still giving measures of seed to late comers off the works; but this, of course, did not interfere with attention to the other forms of relief, and in the interim, I was able to make an extended tour through the other two divisions of my circle.

It would be impossible to over-estimate the benefits reaped by the people from the distribution of this fund; the smiling fields of rice in the lowlands, the vast stretches of *kodon* and *kutki* on the highlands, through which I have just been passing, speak for themselves. But it was unfortunate, though unavoidable, that, during the month of June, the attention of Relief and Revenue Officers was diverted to the ensurance of future prosperity just at the moment when present distress was sufficient to claim their concentrated energies. This (together with the beginning of July) was the critical time. On June 17th the monsoon burst; after a prolonged break, it burst afresh on July 8th; and, with the coming of the rains, the distress developed to immeasurable limits and with appalling rapidity.

We have seen how, during the hot weather, the Gond shunned the aid offered him, and placed his reliance on jungle produce. With the coming of the rains that produce failed. Hitherto, fruits and blossoms had kept him, at least outwardly, in good condition. I had found the famine far less apparent than in the much richer district of Jubbulpore. The death-rate had remained creditably low. But this was the lull before the storm. Suddenly the forest ceased to yield the diet on which the Gond had been subsisting; he was thrown back upon roots, damp leaves, toad-stools, and the rank-growing *chikora* or wild indigo—a plant, the mere smell of which frequently produces biliousness and fever. These, combined with the damp and unwholesome season of the year, acted like poison on his weakened system. As I toured during June and July through those parts which I had visited in the hot season, I became aware of a terrible change; haggard faces and gaunt forms began to haunt the highways and market places; and the apprehension of a still wider calamity seemed to hang over the people. At the same moment the death-rate suddenly rose by leaps and bounds, as is shown by the reports both for the district at large and for particular villages, especially those situated in remote jungles. I may quote a typical instance from the *sál* forests, where signs of distress in May were almost wholly wanting; but where, in July, almost the entire population was suddenly thrown back upon the unwholesome fruit of the *sál* tree,—a bitter and irritative nut. In the village of Mecha, situated in this locality, there occurred in April no death; in May, one; in June, none; in July, five; in August, three; in September, five; and this, though, in August, gratuitous relief was distributed with a liberal hand.

What were the measures adopted to meet the new phase of the distress? The Public Works charges were continued; the tank works necessarily were suspended; and the labourers and infirm transferred to a new set of ghât works for the improvement of the mountain paths—a form of work eminently suitable for the rainy season. But, at the same time, it was recognised that the most satisfactory form of relief during the monsoon months was that which could be gratuitously disbursed to the people in their own homes; accordingly, in July, an elaborate programme of kitchens and village relief was drawn up, and immediately put into effect; it was this that remained the mainstay of relief until the close of the famine.

But, at the moment when the habits of the Gond first rendered relief possible, physical circumstances rendered its application most difficult. Many were driven away from the works and centres by the discomforts inherent in the rainy season. The ghât works suffered greatly; for they were situated in remote and often malarious tracts, with a view to relieving the inhabitants of the locality. Though admirable hutting was provided, fever and dysentery worked fearful havoc. I have frequently found the Officer-in-charge and his entire staff completely laid up with ague. Communication became difficult; and the regular transmission of funds and food-supplies was consequently precarious. When seized with sickness, the Gond is generally too shy to seek medical aid, even when at hand; and the enquiries have shewn me that many stricken with fever, instead of going into the hospitals crawled away to die at once in their homes. In the case of kitchens (chiefly intended for children) the work was easier. The Police and Forest Departments were utilized for this purpose; but a large proportion of the more remote kitchens in my circle had to be placed under non-official supervision; where it was difficult to find competent managers, and, when they were found, to stir them to the necessary activity. Eighteen kitchens were opened in my circle; and they have proved most beneficial. Village-relief, however, was now the largest and most pressing business. The Gond, when at home, lives in *tolas*, or small groups of huts, which taken together, go to make up a village. The huts which constituted a *tola* are linked together by bamboo enclosures, within

which are the maize-patches, and whose intricate arrangement often renders it hard to discover an entry. Each hut consists of a wall of bamboo wattling and a roof of dry grass; the only solid part being the mud *kothias* or grain-bins, which are built inside the house and form the *intima domus* of the establishment. When the Gond, as frequently happens, is urged by an outbreak of cholera or by the exhaustion of the immediately surrounding soil, to desert the old *tola* and build a new one, the outer fabric of the huts soon perishes under the action of fire or weather; and the blackened *kothias*, which in shape are exactly like coffins set up on end, alone remain standing in the deep jungles or on the far-stretching prairies—a melancholy symbol of desolation. When first constructed, the huts look tidy and neat, the Gonds being masters in the art of plaiting; but, after a few weeks of habitation, the squalor of the place becomes unspeakable. The odour of an ordinary Indian village is fitful—it meets you at unexpected corners and again dies away; that of an old Continental city is manifold, and the constant succession of changing nasal sensations is in itself an alleviation; that which permeates and surrounds the Gondish *tola* is one, all-pervading, monotonous, sickening and indescribable. It was to these unwholesome haunts that the Gonds were now driven to return by the deluge of the monsoon. The distress could be located; but the difficulties of alleviating it remained immense. During the rains the limits of my circle were re-adjusted so as to exclude Bamhni, and take in the whole of Ramnagar and Bichhia. The money for the relief of those who were brought upon the registers had to be calculated from monthly bills presented by the patwaries to the Revenue Inspectors at their respective head-quarters. These bills were collected by the Revenue Inspectors and submitted at the head-quarters of the tahsil, the required sum being then forwarded at the beginning of each month to the Inspectors, each of whom, in turn, distributed it to his patwaries; and these, again, placed it in the hands of the recipients in the villages. This system, the best and simplest available, is, in a district like Mandla, fraught with difficulty. The country being poor and thinly populated, the Revenue Inspectors' circles are of very large area. To obviate this, each circle was, for purposes of famine administration, temporarily divided into three; and, to each Revenue Inspector, two Additional Inspectors were appointed. Nevertheless, the head-quarters of circles were sometimes at a distance of several days' difficult marching from the tahsil Treasury. The Patwari circles, too, are immense—sometimes as large in area as an ordinary Revenue Inspector's circle. In a low-land district, the Patwari can often make the round of his villages in a day and the journey entails 3 or 4 miles of easy riding. In Mandla a Patwari may have to make a tour of 60 or 70 miles through difficult jungles in order to see his whole circle. Moreover, in my whole circle of some 1,800 square miles area, there were but 10 miles of '*pucka*' road (famine works have added a few more). Out of my 6 sub-circles, 4 were totally unprovided with any Post-office. Add to this the enhanced difficulty of communication owing to the rains, and the fact that practically all the distressed had to be brought on to the relief rolls simultaneously; a beginning had, indeed, been made in the hot months; but now whole villages, hitherto unaffected, collapsed at once under the sudden grip of famine; and in some of the poorer, 50 or 60 per cent. of the inhabitants had to be placed without delay upon the registers. What wonder if many succumbed to the poisonous effects of *chikora* and toad-stools, before the money could be placed in their hands? At the same time the difficulties of touring were greatly enhanced. Camels became useless, and coolies, a most unsatisfactory form of transport, had to be employed, until it was found possible to provide elephants. Tents had to be abandoned; in all my circle, with the exception of Mandla itself, there was one *dák*-bungalow; police-outposts are infrequent, and I was often glad to seek shelter in a native hut. The rivers rose and had to be crossed in rough 'dug-out' canoes; often even these were wanting, and it was necessary to ride across, water over the saddle, while goods and chattels were carried across on the heads of coolies struggling breast-deep against a rushing torrent. Sometimes even this was impossible, and we had to sit down and wait till the river subsided; I have been cut off from my camp, hungry and soaked, for a whole night by a sudden and unexpected flood. Owing to the same cause whole groups of villages were sometimes cut off from the outer world; and the Inspecting Officer might be forced to sit with his bag of rupees on one bank, while the people were perishing on the opposite shore. Nor, the village reached, was the difficulty always at an end. The Gond will frequently, even when urged by privation, run away at the approach of an European, a Hindu or a Musalman, and hide himself in the jungles. Often no forewarning of the approach of relief would prevent the destitute from wandering off in search of unwholesome weeds, and so missing the opportunity of aid. In some villages inspections were made over and over again by several different officers and yet miserably emaciated creatures failed to appear, and only came forward when it was too late to save their lives. The division of each village into *tolas* was a hinderance to thorough examination; I have known the people of a village conceal the existence of such outlying hamlets from mere inertness and the dread of being obliged to show the way. The effectual inspection of a single village of several separate *tolas*, may involve a circuit of 4 or 5 miles, and occupy a considerable portion of the day. When the people came forward, it was often hard to distinguish who were really in need of aid. Indulgence in unwholesome jungle-produce does not necessarily bring about emaciation; often the external appearance remains unchanged, and the sufferer is suddenly carried off by dysentery, or the first indication of privation is swelling of the feet. This latter effect was very common in the *sál* jungles, and, indeed, through all the

wilder regions. A man appears before you apparently in good health; you consider him unqualified for relief, till, looking at his feet, you perceive an unnatural swelling of the instep. The danger of this disease is that its first appearance indicates likewise that the doom of the adult is sealed (I have known children recover when carefully tended in the kitchens and fed on a special diet of milk). No efforts can avail to save the sufferer; the swelling extends up the legs; it attacks the hands and arms; it distorts the face and closes the eyes. The sufferer loses the use of his limbs, and perishes an unsightly and pitiable object. Sometimes, too, the money given was abused by the destitute; it was spent in liquor, to which some of the Baiga communities are particularly prone; in some villages I found that the recipients, stricken with fever, neglected to buy proper food, and thought it more efficacious to purchase a goat as sacrifice to appease the local *deo*; in one very remote village, the starving people threw away the money, not because they could not purchase grain, but because grain so obtained, would, they thought, at once kill them.

Such were the causes which retarded the spread of relief in the rains and tended to weaken its effect. Yet spread it did, and was given not merely freely, but, in some localities, lavishly. Yet the death-rate continued fearfully high up to the end of September. Famine was aided in the work of destruction by disease. Mandla is in the best of years an unhealthy district; in the hot weather the scanty water-supply of the plateau regions facilitates the spread of cholera; in the rains and early cold weather the malarial fever (specially in the Bichhia Circle) is so universal and so malignant, that native officials and servants look upon the district as a penal settlement. But during this monsoon it seems to have been swept over by a wave of choleraic diarrhœa and of malarial fever similar to that which, in 1879, decimated certain districts of the North-Western Provinces. That this ill-health was to a large extent indirectly due to famine, I have no doubt; and, in making out the mortality statistics, whenever investigation showed that the deceased was accustomed to live on jungle-produce, I have notwithstanding any denial of emaciation on the part of the villagers, classed the death as due to starvation. Nevertheless, the large number of deaths among the strong and healthy; the assertions which I heard in many villages that this year disease had made extraordinary ravages among rich and poor alike; the curiously local character of the high mortality, and, most of all, the very large number of deaths occurring among cultivators who had received solid sums from the Charitable Relief Fund, all tend to show that destructive forces, other than that of famine, were abroad. In my own camp, the havoc wrought by fever was extraordinary; hardly a member either of my official or private establishments but had to be sent (sometimes in *dhoolies* and for a distance of three or four days' march) into head-quarters or away to Jubbulpore to recover (or in some cases to die) from the deadly effects of the climate.

We now pass to the final stages of famine operation. Before the middle of September, village and kitchen relief had expanded enormously, and had reached (and, in some localities, exceeded) their proper limits. The people were in their homes enjoying a competent maintenance, and it became possible for Relief Officers to turn their attention to the distribution of those other comforts which have been so generously poured into the country from every side. First, there was the American grain, which, it was determined, should serve as maintenance to the poorer cultivators, till the ripening of the maize placed them beyond the need of any support. The amount allotted to my circle was large; but it was disposed of with the utmost rapidity. The cultivators, delighted with the new kind of grain, determined to reserve a portion for sowing; and perhaps it is not too much to hope that the generosity of the United States may, in these remote uplands, receive a lasting memorial, in the shape of the cultivation of species of maize and bean superior to the kinds hitherto grown by the inhabitants. Next came a second distribution of Charitable Relief Fund as aid in the winter sowings; the work was similar to that which I have already described as undertaken in May and June; with this difference, that I now distributed in the more thinly populated circles of Ramnagar and Bichhia, and the work was, in consequence, less heavy. Finally, there was the distribution of clothes, provided likewise out of the Charitable Relief Fund. In order to make the distribution as general as possible, I allotted an advance to each of the six circle officers; and in this way much useful work has been done. I also aided in the distribution myself; and my camp was always accompanied by an elephant or a camel which presented the appearance of an itinerant clothier's shop. I have thus disbursed, over the whole circle, 326 thick blankets, a welcome comfort to the aged at the beginning of the cold season. I have, besides this, clothed 617 persons, mostly women; each person received on the average about 6 yards of good cloth, the length varying according to age and sex; and this work still continues.

By the end of September the maize had ripened and was harvested; during October the rice crop became ready and was partially cut, proving an exceptionally heavy harvest; by the beginning of November the reaping of *kodon* and *kutki* had fairly commenced. It only remained to withdraw, gently and by degrees, the relief which had maintained the people till the harvest put an end to the acuter stage of the distress, and, so far as possible, to temper the wind to the shorn lambs. This work has been partially accomplished and is still proceeding. By the end of October the relief-works were closed, suitable relief being provided for the infirm and emaciated who were still to be found there. The closing up of kitchens and of village relief is still in progress.

In reviewing the famine administration of this district, the exceptional difficulties which had to be encountered, should constantly be borne in mind. During the hot weather the habits of the people rendered their relief upon an adequate scale, an impossibility. The majority of the people could not be found; and, owing to the abundance of subsistence which could be obtained in the forests, there was an absence of those premonitory warnings which might have been supplied by widespread emaciation or overwhelming 'rushes' on to the works. When the crash came with the bursting of the monsoon, it was sudden, universal and overwhelming. No staff, however large and well-appointed, could have kept pace with the appalling calamity. The forces of nature, swollen torrents, trackless mountains, impracticable jungles, and disease which laid low alike the sufferer and the bringer of relief,—all were arrayed upon the side of famine. The wonder is, not that the mortality stood so high during the rainy and unwholesome months, but that so many survive to tell the tale. The startling record of those who perished remains in the vital statistics and the reports of Government; we might invert the question of the Roman satirist and ask "But where is the record of those who were saved?" It will live in the minds of those, at least, who, during that distressful period, saw whole villages being kept alive by an elaborate system of relief, in the deep forests of Ramnagar and Ghugri and on the remote and savage plains of Bichhia. Had it not been for those measures, it is hardly too much to say that hundreds of square miles, where now the peaceful Gond is contentedly harvesting his crops, would to-day be utterly desolate and uninhabited.

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